Christ Confessed:

OR,

SEVERAL IMPORTANT

QUESTIONS and CASES

ABOUT

The Confession of CHRIST.

Written by a Preacher of the GOSPEL.

And now a Prisoner.

Rom. 10 10.

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.

Mark 8. 38.

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinfull generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.

Aug. de Temp. 181.

Salvi esse non possumus, nisi ad salutem proximorum, etiam ore profiteamur fidem.

Zuing. 3. *Epist.*

Quas non opertet mortes præeligere, quod non supplicium potiùs ferre; imò in quam profundam inferni abyssum, non intrare quam contra conscientiam attestari?

Printed in the Year 1665.

1.

This Book contains 5 small Tracts.

HARVARD COLLEGE
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An Advertisement to the Reader.

Although these Cases were not undertaken by the Author for the Press, but onely for the private Satisfaction of some Brethren upon their earnest desire, yet, having fallen into my hands, I have adventured (though without any such Commission) to commit them to publick view. Thinking it more Eligible to be injurious to my Friend, then to prejudice the Common Good of Christians, by burying his profitable Labours (so suitable to the present Times) under a Bushel. Farewell.

READER,

THese Papers providentially coming to my view, I cannot forbear to tell thee how strangely I was affected with delight in the perusal of them: I had not read many Pages, but *ex pede Herculem,* I saw such discoveries in it of a clear Understanding, and an Heart devoted to Christ, that I blessed God for such a man, and for such a Providence which ingaged him in so seasonable and serious an Undertakement as this is. Here thou hast a judicious and clear Determination of the present *Grand Cases of the Times*, wherein the Learned Author hath cut by a threed, and performed that part of his Work with admirable exactness and judgement. Thou wilt also finde his skill in Perswading no whit inferiour to his judgement in Determining. In a word, the Subject is so seasonable and weighty, and the Management of it so excellent, that it is a thousand Pities it should miss thy hands, if thou be one that art ingaged in the Cause of Christ in this hour of temptation. I will adventure to say (though I neither know the Author, nor have any Commission from him) that later years have scarcely shewed a more accurate, choice, or seasonable Discourse: And I doubt not but its own worth will ingage all serious Christians to accept and value it, more then any Letters of Commendation from me can do.

Farewell.

Deareſt

Dearest Brethren,

You were pleased to desire our Answer *to these* Eight *following* Questions: *Your acceptance and improvement of what is here offered, in order thereunto, with much submission to your maturer judgements, is the desire of this Preface.*

The disadvantages for a strict Disquisition *of these* Questions, *being such as they are with* us, *in this recess from our Studies; It was thought most expedient, to cast this Work into some abler hand, that abounds also with more* Leisure *and* Liberty *of consulting* Books *and* Men. *But after some weeks attendance, finding no probability of effecting* our (*and therein* your) *desires by others, We re-assumed the consideration hereof amongst our selves, and committed the whole Work to the care of a particular* Brother: Commending him and it to *the conduct of* God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to make the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

QUEST. I.

What is it to Confess?

To *Confess*, imports somewhat *Negatively*, and somewhat *Positively*.

Negatively it imports this; That as 1. We do not *deny* what is to be confessed: So 2. that we do not *depress* or *conceal* it; nor 3. *Defer* our confession, when it is now due from, or incumbent on us: Which two are to their *degree* a denial, at least *implicite*.

Positively.

Positively. To *confess*, implies more then to *acknowledge*, in the *common* acceptation of this *term*, with us and others. That of *Cicero pro Rabirio* I may not omit: *Crimen in me susciperem agnoscerem, confiterer*: It imports as much as this; That we do 1. *Acknowledge* the matter before us; and this 2. *Actually*, or *in presenti*; and also 3. *Openly*: Confession is an *open* acknowledgement, an *overt act*. 'Tis said of *John*, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites to him from *Jerusalem*, to *ask him who art thou? He confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ*, John 1.19,20. He did neither *deny* the truth, nor *detain* his testimony, nor *defer* it till another time; but *actually and openly acknowledged*, touching *himself*, that he was not the Christ; and touching our *Saviour*, that he was *the Christ, the Son of God*, ver. 36.

QUEST. II.

What is it to confess CHRIST?

TO this I shall speak, 1. More *Generally*, then 2. More *Specially*. *In General*, I shall premise briefly, 1. Touching the *Object*, and then 2. Touching the *Act* or *Operation*, with reference to this Object.

1. The *object* of this act is *Christ*, which I understand, in its ordinary latitude, not onely of *Christ himself*, but of *whatsoever carrieth his Stamp upon it*, than doth become matter of confession, *i.e.* of *Christ and all his concernments*, which he hath either *revealed as matter of Faith*, or doth *require as matter of Obedience*.

In this sense, the Apostle seemeth to understand this *term* in *Heb.* 11.26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ*, &c. Christ was not reproached by the Egyptians in his *person*, to whom (as

(as far as appears) he was not at all yet made known: But these reproaches were rather, in what *he* had prescribed, and *his* practised; in the *Doctrines* which (as *Moses* well knew) Christ had imparted, and in the *Duties* which (as he well knew also) Christ had injoyned.

Paul sticks not to call the Gospel of Christ by this name, *Christ* and *Christ crucified*, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. Christ being (indeed) the *Sum* and *Subject Matter* of the Gospel; that contains all matters of Christian Belief and Obedience. Plainly, *The preaching of Christ*, imports the preaching of whatsoever matters of *Faith* or *Worship* are prescribed by, and point us to him, as their *End* and *Author*, *Acts* 5. 42. & 11. 20. & 8. 5. *Phil* 1. 15---19.

Hence, the confession of Christ must import also, the confession of whatsoever matters he hath so prescribed, whether of Faith or Worship. For your *profession* of him must be of the same latitude with our *preaching* of him, and so, extensive to the *whole* Doctrine contained in his Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 9. 13. 1 *Thes.* 1. 5, *ad finem*.

Again, the *Words* of Christ (which comprehend all the *Doctrines* and *Duties of* Godliness) are *explicitely* made the Object of confession, together with Christ, *Mar.* 8. 38. *Luke* 9. 26. And they that have learned *these concerns*, are *therein* said to have learned Christ; as likewise those that *deny* them, are *therein* said to deny *him*. There is so exact, and close an union and connexion between him and them, which carry the impression of Christs name upon them, *Eph.* 4. 20. *Jude* v. 4. 2 *Pet.* 2. 1.

Let me subjoyn; that as Christ accounts those acts of *charity* done to, or detained from *him*, which are done to, or detained from *his Members*, Matth. 25 40, 45. So, he accounts those acts of *confession* as done to, or detained from *himself*, which are in declaring for, or denying of *his Matters*, 1 Joh. 4. 2, 3. 2 Joh. v. 3, 9.

2 The *act* or *operation* before us, in reference to this *Object*, is to *confess*. [*What is it to confess Christ?*] This is (1) *Exclusive*

clusive of three things in the *Negative*; *viz.* 1. Of *Denying* him and his *Truths* (opposed to confessing, *Matth.* 10. 32, 33. *Luke* 12.8,9.) 2. Of *Detaining* or withholding our *Testimony*, whether by a downright concealment, or by dissembling coverts. 3. And of *Deferring* or delaying our *Testimony* till another time, when it is of *present* debt and use. These two are *implicitely*, *interpretatively*, and to their *degree*, a deniall of Christ. (2) 'Tis *Inclusive* of this, in the *Affirmative*; 1. That we *acknowledge* Christ and his concerns. 2. *Actually*, or in present: and also 3. *Openly* or *publickly*, *i. e.* not onely in *secret*, between God and my own self, but so, as it may be to others *sense* and *observation* also. So much 1. The Notation of the word ὁμολογήσει and *Confitebitur* doth import: 2. And the next words to *confess* do intimate it, *viz.* *before men*: 3. And that noble and worthy Promise of Christ, immediately subjoyned, does instruct us as much also, *I also will confess*, i.e. I will *openly acknowledge him before the Angels*, *and before my Father which is in heaven*, Mat. 10. 32. Luke 12.8.

But more *especially*. What it is to *confess Christ*, seems best explicated, by considering 1 How 'tis *injoyned*, and 2. How 'tis *illustrated* in the Scriptures last mentioned.

'Tis *injoyned* as a *Debt of Justice* from us to him: from *us*, as his *Inferiors*; to *him*, as our *Superior*. So that to confess Christ, bespeaks such an open acknowledgement of him, as includeth 1. His *Rights*, both of *Dignity* with him, and of *Dominion* over us. 2. And our *Relation* to, and *dependance* upon him.

'Tis *illustrated* by Christs confession of us, which is not without the acknowledgement of our *near Relations* to him, and of his *dear Affections* for us: So that this confession of Christ by us, implies likewise our publick acknowledgement of his *nearness* and *relation to us*, and of our *dearnesses and affections for him*.

These things I shall sum up *severally*, and as *succinctly* as I may.

First,

I.

Firſt, *We are to acknowledge the Rights and Dignities of Chriſt*, Phil. 2. 11. This is to profeſs our Faith of Chriſt, and ſpeaks the *profeſſed ſenſe we have of him.* Theſe Rights being of a *large compaſs*, this confeſſion cannot be of a *little comprehenſion:* But they may be *conſidered*, and are to be *confeſſed*, with relation to his *perſon*, and to his *place* and calling.

1. We are to acknowledge then the *Rights of, and appertaining to his perſon*; which was the ſubject matter of thoſe ſignal and momentous confeſſions by *Peter* and *John*, Matth. 16. 16. John 1. 34. & 6 69. Within this verge, we may take in the confeſſion (1) Of his *twofold Nature, Divine* and *Humane*, *Iſa.* 9. 6. 1 *John* 5. 20. & 4. 2. (2) The *tranſcendent Union* of thoſe *Two Natures in one perſon*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. John 1. 14. (3) His *tranſcendent perfections and fulneſs*, John 3. 28---33. Cantic. 5 9, 10. And therewith taketh in (4) His twofold *ſtate*, both of Abaſement or *Humiliation*, and of Advancement or *Exaltation*, Phil. 2 6---12. That taketh in the confeſſion of *whatever* appertaineth to his *Conception, Birth, Life, Death, and continuing in the ſtate of the dead*, till the third day, *Iſai.* 7. 14. & 9. 6. *Acts* 10. 38, 39. 1 *Cor.* 15. 3, 4. This takes in the open acknowledgement of his *Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, Sitting at the Right hand of God, and his coming again to judge*, both the juſt and unjuſt, and whatſoever appertaineth to them; Of which the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians *were*, and we (to our proportion) *ſhould be witneſſes*, Acts 10. 39---44.

2. We are to acknowledge *the Rights of and appertaining to his Place and Office*, as the *Anointed Chriſt*, according to the memorable and imitable Examples of *Peter*, and of *Martha*, Luke 9. 20. John 11. 27. This includes our open acknowledgement 1 Of his *Anointing*, with a moſt diffuſive Fulneſs both of *Authority* and *Ability*, for his Place and Office, *Pſalm* 45. *throughout.* And 2 Of his *actual diſcharge* of theſe Offices, according

to his twofold *Eſtate*, and the *Exigences* of thoſe for whom he ſtands inveſted, *Iſaiah* 33.22. *Acts* 5.31. as *Prophet*, *Prieſt* and *King*: of which more in the enſuing Paragraphs.

II.

Secondly, We are to acknowledge openly our *Relations to*, and *dependance on Chriſt*, Iſaiah 45.23,24. This is to confeſs our *Faith in Chriſt*, and ſpeaks our *profeſſed Subjection* to Chriſt. Our Relation to him is not founded onely upon an *external call by*, and *conſecration to him*, but upon an *effectual call by*, and *internal conjunction with* him. This Union or conjunction is made by *Faith*, on our part, *Epheſ* 3.17. which *receives* Chriſt, and ſo *relates us to him*, in *all* his Offices, *John* 1.12. 1 *Cor* 1.30. So that our *Faith and Hope in*, as well as *of* him, and our *voluntary Obedience to* him (which I ſum up in one word *dependance*) is *proper matter* of this Profeſſion, and open acknowledgement, whereof we are now ſpeaking, 1 *Pet.* 3.15. 2 *Corinth.* 9.13. So

1. We are to acknowledge our *dependance* on him, in point of *Light*, and for *Revelation* and guidance, as our *Prophet*, Acts 3.22,23. Thus we are to confeſs him, (1) As our *alone Teacher*, and the *Supreme* Prophet of his Church, *John* 1.18 *Heb.* 1.2. Not admitting (ſo far as concerns us) either 1. Officers of humane Invention, to teach, 2 *Tim.* 4.3. *Epheſ* 4.11. *&c.* Or 2 His Officers, teaching humane Impoſtures, 2 *John*, verſe 10. *Rom.* 16.17. Or 3 Opinions and Doctrines of humane Imagination, *Jude*, verſe 3, 4. 1 *Tim.* 4.1---7. Or 4 Ordinances of humane Inſtitution, to teach by and with, *Col.* 1.20. *ad finem.* *All* which we are (according to our capacities, and the preſent circumſtances we are in) to *profeſs againſt*. (2) *All that he hath taught and doth teach, for our Edification and Inſtruction*, Coloſſ 1.9, 10. There is *no Truth* which he hath ſo taught, that we *may part with*, or *muſt not profeſs*, due circumſtances attended, *Proverbs* 23.23. *Matth.* 28.20. (3) *All whereby he doth teach*, likewiſe as

as his *Spirit*, 1 Cor. 2. 12, 13. his *Scriptures*, Phil. 2. 16. his *Servants by Office*, Hebr. 13. 17. as alſo his *Sacraments*, 1 Cor. 11. 26. *All* which we muſt give our teſtimony to, and for, wherein, and when God ſhall call us thereunto.

2. We are to acknowledge our *dependance* on him in point of *Life*, and for *Reconciliation* to God, as our *Prieſt*, Hebr. 6. 2, *&c.* So we are to confeſs him (1) As our *alone Prieſt*, without any *Colleague* or *Succeſſor*, *after Melchiſedec's Order*, Heb. 7 11, 12, 28. and may not admit (as far as concerns us) any other *Order* of Prieſthood, *Heb.* 7. 15---20 any other *Obſervances*, as Altars, *&c. properly* appertaining to that abrogated Prieſthood, *Heb.* 7. 18. any other *Means of Reconciliation*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. Acts 4. 12. or any other *Maker of Interceſſion*, Hebr. 7. 24, 25. (2) The *abſolute perfections* of his Prieſthood, *Heb.* 8. 1, 2. *&c.* as one that was perfectly *fitted* for it, *Heb.* 4. 14, 15. perfectly *fulfilled* whatſoever was prefigured concerning it, *Heb.* 6. 11, *&c.* hath perfectly *freed* us from all Legal Rites and Inſtitutions, and from the Lords revenging Juſtice, *Heb.* 7. 18. & 9. 28. and is a *Prieſt for evermore*, Heb 7. 3. (3) The *acts* and *parts* of his Prieſthood, both 1. *Paſt*, in the *offering of himſelf a Sacrifice once for all*: Not admitting any other *proper Sacrifice*, or whatever other *pretenſions* are made, or uſed, for *Divine Satisfaction*, Hebr. 10. 12, *&c.* 1 Pet 1, 18, 19. And 2. *Preſent*, in his continued appearing, in the preſence of God for us, *Heb.* 9. 24. 1 *Tim* 2 5.

3. We are to acknowledge our *dependance* upon Chriſt in point of *Law*, and for *application* of the Redemption wrought by him, as for *regulation* alſo of us, *Iſaiah* 45. 22. *John* 1. 49. And ſo, (1) That it is his *alone* Prerogative to be *King* and *Head* of all his Church, *Iſa.* 9. 6, 7. *Epheſ.* 1 2?. to *conſtitute* Church-Laws, *properly* ſo called, *Iſaiah* 33. 22. to *ſubſtitute* Church-Officers, 1 *Corinth.* 12. 28. *Epheſ.* 4. 8, 11. to *inſtitute* Church-Seals and Cenſures, *Matth.* 28. 19. & 18. 18. 1 *Corinth.* 11. 23. and to have the *alone inveſtiture of the Conſcience*,

Iſaiah

Iſaiah 4. 12. 1 *Corinth.* 8. 6. *ad finem.* (2) His *adequate perfections and qualifications* for this Kingdome, *Pſalm* 45. 1, *&c.* (3) His *acts of power and adminiſtration*, Acts 19. 8. in the irreſiſtible application of that life, and immortality he hath brought to light by the Goſpel, *Iſaiah* 55. 4, 5. In reſcuing ſinners from their natural ſervitude, into the liberty of his Subjects, *Pſalm* 110. 2, 3. In relief of his Subjects, in and under their ſtraits and ſufferings, *Iſaiah* 63. 9. In remitting of, and correcting them for their ſins, *Acts* 5. 31. *Revel* 3. 19. In rewarding their Services, *Revel.* 22. 12. And in reſtraint of, and revenging himſelf and them, upon all his and their enemies, *Pſalm* 110. 1, *&c.*

To inſtance all the matters of confeſſion, would make a juſt *Syſteme* of *Divinity*: I onely intimate ſome *general Marks*, and with accord eſpecially, to the juncture of *Times* wherein, and *Men* among whom we live. Yet, I humbly conceive, that all the matters of confeſſion may be reduced to one or other of theſe heads. In ſhort, as the *whole* form of ſound words, which we are to *hold faſt*, is by the Apoſtle briefly caſt under theſe two general heads, *Faith* and *Love which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; ſo, therefore whatſoever is a Doctrine, either of *Faith*, or of *Obedience* (expreſſed by Love, becauſe Love is the *Spring* and ſum of it) is proper matter of confeſſion: And in both we may be (properly enough) ſaid to confeſs Chriſt, he being the *Object* and *Original* of them both, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13.

III.

Thirdly, We are to acknowledge openly *Chriſts Relation* to us, as well as *ours* to him; and therewith our *dearneſſes* for him: that as *he will avouch us for his, hereafter, before his Father*, and not be aſhamed to ſay, *Theſe are mine*, and will make us up as his jewels, *Luke* 12. 8. *Malac* 3. 17. So ſhould *we avouch him for ours here before men*, appropriating him, as he doth us; with *Thomas*, ſaying, *My Lord, and my God*; and with the Spouſe,

Spouſe, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, John 10. 28. Cant. 2. 16.

Jeſus Chriſt, at the great and laſt Day (as alſo to a degree, even here) ſticks not to declare his *ſignal* accounts of ſincere Confeſſors before all the formal and ungodly world; his ſignal kindneſſes in them, his ſtedfaſt conſtancy to them, his ſuperlative complacency for them, his ſolemn clearing and acquitting of them, from all whereof they are accuſed, and againſt all that do accuſe or implead them: And doth ſpecially confeſs and acknowledge what they have confeſſed of him, what they have ſaid, done, or ſuffered for him. With *proportion* to this acknowledgment of us *by Chriſt in heaven, we muſt acknowledge Chriſt upon earth*; and may not ſtick to acknowledge openly (though without any oſtentation) (1) Our apprehenſions of Chriſt, beyond all, *Phil* 3. 7,8 *Matth.* 13. 44,45. (2) Our affections towards Chriſt, above all, *Luke* 14. 26. *Cant* 5. 10, &c (3) Our adheſion of will to him, notwithſtanding all that may be feared, or is, or hath been felt, *Acts* 20. 23,24. & 21. 13,14. (4) Our approbation of him, and well-pleaſedneſs with him, in all that they either enjoy of or by him, or endure for him, or finde enjoyned by him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Romans* 7. 25. (5) Our advocating for him, and acquitting of him from all that is either objected againſt, or oppoſed unto him, *Rom.* 1. 16. 1 *Cor.* 1. 21, *&c.* (6) His actions alſo in and upon us, as likewiſe his Paſſions for us, *Pſalm* 66. 16. 1 *Tim.* 1. 13,14. *Iſaiah* 53 4. *&c.*

I ſhall onely annex this to what hath been premiſed (it being hitherto but implicitely pointed at) That as by our confeſſion of Chriſt, is *intended* an open declaration of him our *Saviour*; So, therewith is *implied* an open declaration againſt *Sin*, which is (indeed) openly injurious to his Offices, and to his Honour: And they that bear an open teſtimony againſt ſin, do therein bear teſtimony to our Saviour, whoſe Quarrel they propugn, and whoſe Cauſe they plead therein; who calls them *his Witneſſes*, and counts their *teſtimony againſt ſin*, as a *teſtimony to himſelf*;

himſelf; and their toleration of, or connivance at ſin, as a turning aſide from their Sacred Confeſſion, *Revel.* 19. 2, 6, 13, 14, &c. and 20 4.

QUEST. III.

Who are to confeſs CHRIST?

TO this (as to the inſuing Queſtions) I ſhall make a few ſhort Premiſes, then manifeſt my ſenſe in ſeveral Propoſitions. The Premiſes are theſe: (1) The Queſtion it ſelf ſufficiently intimateth, that the confeſſion of Chriſt by men is not propounded as a matter *Arbitrary*, or of *indifferency*, but as a matter of *Neceſsity*, or of *Duty*; and imports as much as, *Who are ingaged or obliged to confeſs Chriſt?* (2) This confeſſion, as it admits of ſeveral *kindes* (of which hereafter) ſo alſo, of ſeveral *degrees* in the *ſame* kinde. (3) This confeſſion, being an open acknowledgement of what we know and believe of and in Chriſt, the knowledge therefore of Chriſt muſt be taken into conſideration herewith. (4) The knowledge of Chriſt is 1 *Impoſsible* to ſome; I mean, in ſecond Cauſes: 2 *Poſsible* to others; and is 3 *Imparted* to ſome others. (5) This alſo is done, or this knowledge is diſtributed to ſeveral perſons, in *ſeveral proportions*, of Evidence, Eminence, Efficacy and Inſtrument. (6) According to mens *knowledge of* Chriſt, or *capacity for* it, and according to their *communications* from and by Chriſt, this *Queſtion* (to me) ſeems beſt to be determined. The Propoſitions follow.

Propoſ.

Propoſ. 1. They are not ingaged to *Confeſs* Chriſt, who are in a *natural invincible incapacity* of knowing, and believing in Chriſt: for, *Nemo tenetur ad impoſſibile*, according to the old and received *Maxime*. Under this invincible incapacity, are two ſorts: Some, through want of *internal Light of Reaſon*, as Infants and Idiots: Some, through want of the *external Light of Revelation*, as are ſuch, to whom the Goſpel never did come, nor could they come to the Light of the Goſpel. *Pagans* who never did, nor could hear Chriſt preached, to whom therefore the knowledge of Chriſt is not *poſſible*. Theſe cannot *know* Chriſt, and therefore are not concerned to *Confeſs* Chriſt: for how ſhall they *confeſs* him, whom they cannot *know* or *acknowledge*? *How ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* Rom. 10. 14. There is no one beam of the knowledge of Chriſt in *Nature*, or in the *Book of the Creatures*. Theſe being then in an invincible incapacity of knowing Chriſt (not to preclude what Divine Grace may, according to his *Abſolute Prerogative, extraordinarily* do for, or diſcover to ſome *particulars*) are not therefore ingaged to the confeſſion of Chriſt; as appears

(1) By the *Nature of Profeſſion*, which is an open acknowledgement of what we know and believe: But theſe *do* not, *can* not know the Lord Chriſt, as was even now evinced.

(2) In that there is *no Precept* on them, either to know, believe in, or confeſs Chriſt. If it be ſaid, they are *commanded* thus to know and believe: I *demand*, By what *Law*? By the *Law of Works or Nature*? This Law doth not reveal the *object*, *Chriſt*, nor did it to *Adam*, in the ſtate of Innocency, and cannot therefore require ſuch *acts*, in relation to this *object*. Is it by the *Law of Faith or Grace*? This Law layes no obligation upon ſuch perſons; becauſe it was never *promulgated to them*, nor doth it, or any Law *oblige* ſuch, to whom it was never *promulgated*. No Law reacheth them, to whom it is not revealed; the obligation of every Law lying *originally* in the *manifeſting*, as well as *meaning* of that Law.

(3) By the *notable Process* of Christ in the Day of Judgement; who will judge none by the *Written Law*, or by the *Law of Faith*, but such as have *sinned in the Law*, [Rom. 2. 12--17] So that the condemnation of these Gentiles will not be, for not confessing of, or closing with Jesus Christ, but for not keeping that just Law of Nature, which is ingraven in their hearts.

Propos. 2. All those are ingaged to *confess* Christ, who are in a *capacity* of knowing Christ, and that as ever they would be known and *confessed* by Christ, [*Mat.* 10. 32. *Luk* 12. 8.] It will not be a discharge, that they *did* not know Christ, if Gods will hath been so declared, as they *might* have known him, but for their own *contumacy* or *carelessness*, [2 *Cor.* 2. 14, 15, 16. & 4. 3. 4.] Christ must not lose his *Soveraignty*, because of mens *sloth* or *sin*. Wheresoever the Gospel is revealed, God requireth, that *every tongue should confess*, that *Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father*, [Phil. 2. 11.] All such *capable subjects* then, are *obliged* to confess Christ. Lo! 1. All are *charged*: God hath said, yea sworn it, [*Isa.* 45. 23. *Rom.* 14. 11.] 2. All are *concerned*, as ever they would *see life and be saved*, Rom. 10. 9, 10. 3. And that they know not Christ (in this case) is not for want of *light*, but for want of *love*; not for want of *means*, or meerly through *weakness of minde*, but from the *willing aversation* of such men, who *love darkness more then light*, and shall therefore receive the *greater condemnation*, Joh. 3. 19, 20. 2 Pet. 3. 5. Isa. 27. 11.

Propos. 3. All are not ingaged to the *same degree* of confessing Christ, who have the *advantages* for knowing, or do *actually* know and believe in Christ. They may be ingaged (perhaps) to the *same kinds* of confession, especially, if under the *same circumstances*; but are not ingaged to the *same degree*. Because

1. All are not *alike*, or to the same degree *inabled*. There are several sizes, statures, ages or attainments of *Christians*, and therefore of *confession*, 1 *John.* 2. 12--14 and 5. 12--14. No doubt, there is a greater eminence required of us under the Gospel,

spel, then was of them under the *Law*, who have greater *helps* from God, and so greater *ingagements* unto God, *Heb.* 2. 2--5.

2. All are not *alike interessed*, in regard of their *intrustment* by *God*, and *imployment* among *men*, and relation unto both: Some are but onely in a *private capacity*, others stand in a *publick capacity*, and may perhaps also have a *particular Commission*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 18, *&c.*

3. All mens confessions are not of *a like influence* to the ends thereunto appointed: Their Examples and Exhortations are not of like efficacy and extensiveness to, and upon others, for the glorifying of God, for the good of Souls, or for the growth of the Gospel: by which *ends* our confession of Christ should be mostly regulated, as will be shewn hereafter.

Propos. 4. They are *especially* ingaged to the *confessing* of Christ, who do *actually* know and believe in Christ. There is a bond of duty lies *generally* upon all to confess Christ, to whom the Gospel comes, by vertue of *his Authority*, and his *Fathers Appointment*: But as these may *have the special blessing* of acceptation in it; so they *have a special bond* and obligation to it. For

1. These are *specially qualified* for this work, having the *Spirit of God dwelling* in them, *which is not a Spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound minde*, and will give *testimony* to the Lord Jesus, in whomsoever he is, and abideth, *Rom.* 8. 11. 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. 1 *John* 4. 2.

2. These are *specially* charged with it, not onely, that they *really* and *actually* do give, but that they be *ready alwayes to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope* (not onely that is *before* them, but *that is in them*, of the *grace*, as well as *object* of hope, *with meekness and fear*, 1 Pet. 3. 14, 15.

3. These are *specially called* his *Witnesses*, in relation to it: whom God therefore *Subpœna's*, and summons to it, once and again, *Isa.* 43. 10. *&* 44. 8. as if the *gain* or *loss* of his *interest* in and before the world, did *depend upon their* giving, or withholding their evidence to his truths and wayes.

4. These have *specially covenanted* it. This is one, and a main *Article* on their part, that they will walk in his wayes, witness to his cause, confess his Name, and keep his commandments: And hereunto they have not onely given him their *word*, but their *hand*, in their effectual calling, *Jer.* 50. 5. *Deut.* 26. 3, 17. *Isa.* 44. 5.

Propos. 5. They are more *signally and eminently* ingaged to *confess* Christ then others, who do, or have *communicated* of more *signal means* and *mercies* by Christ, then others: for *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, *Luke* 12. 48. So then

1. If you are continued and blessed with *more eminent means* then others, you are *bound* to know and confess Christ, more then others. The more *Receipts* by you, the more *Returns* are due *from* you. Every *Talent* is to *trade* with. If God hath laid out two, or five, or ten talents upon you, he looketh for as many again from you; and that your *ministrings* to his *glory*, bear proportion to his *manifold grace* towards you, *Matth.* 25. 14---29. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10.

2. If you have communicated of *more eminent mercy* by Christ then others, you are *concerned* to confess Christ more then others. Every *mercy* infers a bond of *duty*. You are under a fourfold obligation to a more open and observed confession: A bond of *Ingenuity*, a bond of *Gratitude*, a bond of *Justice*, and a bond of *Religion*. How *signal* therefore, how *celebrous* were *Manasseh's*, *Magdalens*, and *Paul's* confessions, that had formerly *been so great sinners*, and had *now seen so great salvation*! 2 *Chron.* 33. 15---17. *Luke* 7. 37, 38, 44, &c. *Mat.* 28. 1, &c. 1 *Cor.* 15. 10.

Propos. 6. They are *most signally* ingaged to confess Christ, who are most *signally inabled* and *intrusted* by Christ. These *owe* most to him, and are *obliged* most in point of *justice* and *gratitude* unto him. To them is *most committed*, and therefore from them will there be *most called for and required*, Luke 12. 48. Let all

Supe-

Superiors, in authority, in gifts, in grace, in government, in relations, in religion, *look well* to it. Give me leave to mention ſome, which are of moſt eminent remark, and ſo (according to their ſeveral intruſtments) are moſt required. Such are Magiſtrates, Miniſters, Martyrs.

Firſt, *Magiſtrates*; who *reign by* Chriſt, and therefore ſhould *rule for* Chriſt, and bring their glory and honour to his *Church* and *Cauſe*, *Prov.* 8. 15, 16. *Rev.* 21. 24. Theſe are moſt eminently called upon, to *Kiſs the Son*, i. e. to expreſs and evidence their love to, reverence for, and ſubjection unto him, which is (indeed) their *beſt policy*, and will inſure them the *beſt proſperity*, Pſal. 2. 11, 12. This the precedents of *Joſhua*, of *David*, *Hezekiah*, *&c.* among *Superior* Magiſtrates; of *Mordecai*, *Obadiah*, *&c.* among *ſubordinate* Magiſtrates, rehearſed in the *Old Teſtament*, and the *Propheſies* therein, relating to the *New Teſtament*, do ſufficiently incourage, and ſtrongly ingage unto. Yea, and the *proper end* of Magiſtracy, which is to be *for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well; and that their people may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty*, Iſa. 49. 23. & 60. 3, 16. 1 Pet. 2. 14. Rom. 13. 3, 4. 1 Tim. 2. 2.

Secondly, *Miniſters*; who *are in his ſtead*, and muſt therefore *appear*, *beyond others*, *for his ſake*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. 2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2, *&c.* This is (1) *Required* by Chriſt, moſt *eminently* from them, and with the moſt inſtant, iterated, expreſs, and ſoul-ingaging arguments and inducements; that they *be not aſhamed of the teſtimony of the Lord*, but adhere to his truths, profeſs, *preach the word, in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, make full proof of their miniſtry, and be partakers of the afflictions of the Goſpel*, 2 Tim. 1. 8. & 6. 13, 14. 2 Tim. 4. 1--6. (2) Their *Relation* to Chriſt exacts it. Theſe are his *Stewards*, his *Embaſſadors*, &c. 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. & 5. 5, 20. and therefore may not be aſhamed, or afraid to ſerve and ſatisfie his commands, and their commiſſions, ſeal their confeſſions, juſtifie his honour, inſiſt upon, and inculcate his Order and their own homage, whoever elſe of the family, or of their fellow-ſ[illegible] deſert him, or whoever elſe deny or deſpiſe him.

(3) Their

(3) Their *Receptions* from Chriſt ingage them: their qualifications, commiſſions, office, honour, miniſtry, maintenance, &c. all look hitherwards; and without this, they cannot be *good Miniſters*, however they are, or may be called *Gods Miniſters*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 6, 11, &c. (4) And their *Remark* is moſt eminent in the Churches of Jeſus, and in the Kingdoms of men. Theſe are the *Light of the world*, ſet on a candleſtick, and are not therefore to ſhut up their light under a buſhel, but to *ſhine before men*, and to *give light to all that are in the houſe*, Mat 5.14--16. Theſe are *a city ſet on an hill*, and are moſt eminently expoſed to the imitation and obſervation of others: As theſe witneſs for, or withhold from him, who are, by office, to be paterns of good works, *Tit.* 2.7. 1 *Tim.* 4.12. ſo the Church, cauſe, and concerns of Chriſt uſually wax or wane, increaſe or decreaſe, in the world, and eſpecially in the Churches of the Saints.

Thirdly, *Martyrs*, to what *degree* ſoever of *Martyrdome*: They, who are called forth by Chriſt to *give witneſs* to him, before the world, to any degree of ſuffering, muſt, according to the copy which he hath left written out before and for them, *witneſs a good confeſſion*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 12, 13. Theſe are ingaged to a degree of eminence, as reſpects (1) Their *preſent entrance*, and this initiating providence. That *flight*, which is allowed by *Caſuiſts*, and by *Chriſt* himſelf to others, that are yet *free* and *unſeared* by Perſecutors, *Mat* 10. 23. is denied thoſe, who are fallen into the hands of, and *ſeized by the Authority* that perſecuteth. And it hath the *Probatum eſt* both of Chriſts own example, and of the holy Apoſtles and Brethren, who (when they might have declined the croſs, and delivered themſelves by flight, yet) did not, durſt not attempt an *eſcape*, till they were diſcharged more *immediately* by God himſelf, or by the *Magiſtrates* own act, in whoſe hands they were held, *Mat.* 26. 52, 53. *Acts* 12. 7 *&* 16 37, 39. (2) The *publick expectation* from others doth ingage them likewiſe, both in reference to his dignity and honour, and the duty which they owe. *Expectations* there are, from the *friends* of C[illegible] whoſe hands ſhould not be weakned, or hearts grieved and wounded; and

and from the *foes* of Christ, whose hands should not be strengthned, or hearts gratified and made glad in their sin and wickedness, by these mens silence or waywardness. (3) The *powerfulness of their example* addes to their ingagement, and obligations powerfull: 1 Upon the *People of God*, to quicken, confirm, and comfort them; and 2 Upon the *persecutors of godliness*, to cool, convince, and convert them, if these resolutely acknowledge and adhere to Christ; to harden, heat and harden them, if these recede or apostatize from Christ. (4) Besides the *praise* and *interest* of *Christ* is now eminently exposed, in this example, and by these expectations, to open observation, and so to honour or dishonour: and this should be the *earnest expectation and hope* of these men above all others (as it was *Pauls*) *that as alwayes, so now also* more abundantly, *Christ shall be magnified in their bodies, whether it be by life or by death*, Phil 1.20.

QUEST. IV.

With what kinde of Confession are we to confess Christ?

Confession is (say some) of two *kindes*: 1 *Negative*. 2 *Positive*, or *Affirmative*. Whether they speak herein, with that *exactness* as is to be expected, is not for me now to examine, who suppose they understand this term *Kinde*, not in the more *limited* and *proper* acceptation thereof, but in the *larger* and *less proper*. But fly (1) The confession of Christ implies two things, 1 A *Negation*, that we do not *deny* Christ, either *vocally* in *words*, Matt. 10.70, 72. or *virtually* in *works*, Tit. 1.16. 2 An *Affirmation*, that we *openly acknowledge* Christ, as hath been premised. (2) Confession of Christ in the affirmative sense is, as 1 Of different *sizes* or *degrees* of *explicitness* and *observedness*; so also 2 Of different *sorts* or *kinds*, of Away use these terms, in their

larger

larger and *common* notion with us. (3) So there is 1 A *formal* or *vocal* confession of Christ, by *word* of mouth: 2 And there is a *virtual* confession of him, by the *works* of a man. Manifest enough it is, that there are many such *confessors* in that catalogue of Martyrs, *Heb.* 11. (4) This *virtual* confession of Christ is, either 1 In an *active way, by doing* for him, *ver.* 33, 34. 2 Or in a *passive way, by induring* for him, *ver.* 36, 37. (5) And this again by induring either 1 the *force* and cruelty of the adversary, *ver.* 35. Or 2 *flight* and exile from our own Country, which is made a degree of *Martyrdome*, ver. 27. (6) Again, 1 There is a confession, that *sorts indifferently*, both with holy men and hypocrites, both a *John*, and a *Judas*, an *Ananias*, as well as the Apostles: which in this regard, we may call *Common*. 2 And there is a *special* confession or *saving*; such as is found with none, but those who are inwardly *sanctified*, and *make confession unto salvation*.

Propos. 1. All these sorts and kindes of confession are due from us, to our Lord Christ, according as they, or any of them may best serve his glory, our own or others good, and according to the several circumstances we are, or may be in, *Phil.* 1. 20--26 Concerning this, you may receive a more full account on the Seventh Question, whither I must dismiss you.

Propos. 2. As we would see what *sort* or *kinde* of confession, as also what *degree* is due from us, in the present case, that is or may be before us: The several *circumstances* we are in must be considered, and compared with the *ends* of confession, whereunto this act subserveth. This *Paul* doth, *Acts* 20. 22--26. And by this you must be determined. See also *Qu.* 7. *prop.* 7, &c.

Propos. 3. All are concerned to see, that their confession of Christ be *special and discriminating*, and not onely such as sorts with hypocrites, and holy men and women. Their *Salvation* is concerned in it: Eternity is at the yonder end; and otherwise, they shall but contract guilt and shame to themselves, incur the loss of whatsoever they declare, do, or suffer; miss the *Reward promised*, to the sincere confessor, and meet with the *Recompence*

threatned

threatned to the unſound Hypocrites and Unbelievers, *Gal.* 3. 4. *Rom* 10. 10, 11. *Mat.* 24. 51. Hence emergeth this Caſe, which I ſhall briefly anſwer.

Queſt. *How may we know whether our Confeſſion of Chriſt be ſaving? yea or no?*

THough the *matter* of the confeſſion may be, and many times is the *ſame*, in that *general* or *common*, and in this *ſpecial* and *ſaving* confeſſion, and a *Demas* or *Judas* cannot be thereby diſcerned from an Iſraelite indeed; yet the *Minde* wherewith, the *Motives* whereon, and the *Manner* wherein the confeſsion is made, which is conſequenced with Salvation, are far different. Let your conſciences then faithfully attend, and anſwer theſe five Queſtions upon the Caſe.

Firſt, *Is your Heart with it? Profeſsing* of, yea or *Propheſying* in Chriſts Name, is but as a *cypher* without a *figure*, and ſignifieth nothing to Salvation, till the heart comes and gives *value* to it: Otherwiſe our precious Saviour would never *profeſs* unto *ſuch* perſons, *I know you not, depart from me ye that work iniquity*, Mat. 7. 22, 23. *The mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh wiſdome, and his tongue talketh of judgement:* (May not others do the ſame? True; but) *the Law of God is in his heart.* There is a copy *within*, of what he confeſſeth *without*, *Pſal.* 37. 30, 31. His *outward expreſsions* are anſwered by, and with *inward impreſsions.* The Spirit hath tranſcribed thoſe *Truths* upon his heart inwardly, which he utters by the inſtruments of ſpeech outwardly, 2 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Jer.* 31. 33. *Heb.* 8. 9. Sirs, 'tis not the confeſsion of Chriſt without you, but *Chriſt* confeſſed *within you, that is the hope of glory: Behold, he deſireth truth in the inward parts*, Col. 1. 27. Pſal. 51. 6.

Secondly, *How is your heart in it?* He is not a confeſſor, that is *one outwardly onely*, neither is that confeſsion, which is *outward in the fleſh*; but he is the confeſſor, that is *one inwardly*, and that the confeſsion to Salvation, *which is of the heart and of the Spirit*,

whoſe praiſe is not of man, but of God, Rom. 2 28,29. & 10.9, 10. They are the onely *Citizens* of *Sion* which is above, *who ſpeak the truth in their heart*, Pſal. 15.1,2.

1. How are you *affected* towards Chriſt then, and to his truths and goodneſs which you confeſs? *You have* (it may be) received the truth in the *light* of it; but *have you received the truth in the love of it?* Otherwiſe, you cannot be *ſaved*, but *your end will be to be damned, who take pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 10,12. Saving profeſſion loves the truth it doth profeſs, and that not onely becauſe of the *truth*, as moſt ſuitable to the *underſtanding*, but for the *goodneſs* of it, as ſanctifying the *will*, as ſtaying and limiting the *affections* from ſin, and about ſenſual objects: *Thy word is very pure, therefore doth thy ſervant love it*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. 119.140. Let conſcience ſpeak; Can you ſay with him, *Oh how I love thy Laws! My ſoul hath kept thy teſtimonies, and I love them exceedingly: Thou putteſt away all the wicked of the earth like droſs, therefore I love thy teſtimonies*, Pſal. 119. 97,167,119.

2. How do you *appretiate* Chriſt and his truths, which you confeſs? *Deſire you to know nothing ſo much as Chriſt and him crucified? Do you count all but loſs and dung*, or *dogs meat*, [σκύβαλα quaſi κυνίβαλα] *in compariſon of the excellency of him, as your Lord? and that you may win* or enjoy Chriſt, *and be found in him?* 1 Cor. 2.2, Phil. 3.7,8,9. The pious confeſſor prefers Chriſt, in the *eſteem* of his *judgement*, and in the *election* of his *will*, to all creatures, to all comforts: yea, not onely ſo prefers his pleaſant *communion*, but his precepts and *commands*. *How ſweet are Chriſts words! yea, ſweeter then the honey and the honey-comb*, Pſal. 119.103. & 19.10. Can you then, in your integrity, affirm before him with that holy confeſſor, *Thy teſtimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, they are the rejoycing of my heart: I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above much fine gold; and eſteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right*, Pſal. 119.111,127,128. & 19.10.

Thirdly, *Whence ariſeth it?* Is it from ſanctifying the Lord

God

God in your hearts within? or from ſtrength of arguments, or ſecular attractives without? Is it from internal *principles*, or external *perſwaſives*? Special confeſſion hath its *ſpring* in the *conſcience*, it is a *ſtream* and iſſue from *ſanctifying the Lord God in our hearts*, 1 Pet. 3. 15, 16. The language and life without are from the Law within. 'Tis the renewed minde transformed into the likeneſs of truth within, that runs forth by the mouth and members without. If you have indeed *learned Chriſt, and have been taught the truth as it is in Jeſus, you will have put on the New man, as well as profeſs new matters*, Pſa. 40. 8, 9, 10. *Eph.* 4. 20---25. Whence ariſeth your confeſſion then? Do you *believe, and therefore ſpeak?* Doth the confeſſion of your Faith in Chriſt outwardly, come from the cloſing of your heart by Faith with Chriſt, as the *Lord your righteouſneſs*, inwardly? This is the onely confeſsion that is conſequenced with Salvation, *Rom.* 10. 9, 10. 2 Cor 4. 13.

Fourthly, *How is it acted or put forth?* In what manner? [See *Queſt* 8] What motions or *acts of grace* are in it? Conference is an act of *Reaſon*, as you are *men*; but confeſsion is (or ſhould be) an act of *Religion*, as you are *new men*. What religious *habits* then are at work herein? what *graces* are put into *act*? what love to your Saviour? what love to Souls? what Faith in, what fear of Chriſt, *&c*? 'Tis *Reaſon* put into *act*, that diſcriminates your ſpeech from a *Parrot* that ſpeaks ſome words (good or bad as he is taught) as well as you: But here wants the *diſcourſe of reaſon*, and ſo 'tis a bruitiſh act in this Bird notwithſtanding. Brethren, ſo 'tis *Religion* put into *act*, that diſcriminates your ſpeakings of Chriſt, from the painted hypocrites, that can ſay as good things of Chriſt, as you can do; but there want the deliberations and acts of Religion herein, and cannot therefore (if *materially*, yet not) *formally* be called a Religious confeſsion of him, while their *hearts are removed from him, and he is far from their reins: They make mention of the Name of the Lord, but not in truth or in righteouſneſs*, Iſa. 29. 13. Jer. 12. 2. Iſa. 48. 1.

Fifthly, *What are your ayms by it?* You ſhould *confeſs that*

Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of the Father, Phil 2.11. Special grace ſeeks his glory upmoſt; and therefore confeſſeth both his ſin and his Saviour, that he may *give glory to the Lord his God*, Joſh. 7.19. *Phil.* 1.20. What ſeek you then? what is it your ſouls firſt intend by it, and do moſt fervently deſire ſhould be the iſſue of it? Is it *your* glory, or the glory of *God* and growth of his Goſpel, that you *principally* deſign by it? Oh! how can you believe, and therefore how confeſs ſavingly and obedientially, *who receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only?* and while you *love the praiſe of men, more then the praiſe of God?* Joh. 5.44. & 12.42,43 The moſt ſplendid confeſſions by the mouth (with the moſt delicious flouriſhes of *Rhetorick*, or moſt demonſtrative furniture of *Logick*) yea the moſt cheerful ſufferings of Martyrdom which ariſe not from Charity (that diſpoſeth the Soul to intend God chiefly) profit nothing to ſalvation, 1 *Cor.* 13.2,3. But if this be your *ultimate end*, that by *teſtifying of the Goſpel of the grace of God*, he may be glorified by you, and his Chriſt may be magnified in you: If your main buſineſs be not applauſe with men, but to approve your ſelves to him, and to advance his concernments; if it be in *obedience* to his Government, and in order to his Glory, you have then no cauſe to be aſhamed of your confeſſions, or afraid of your inſincerity, but ſhould wear the comforts of them in your own conſciences here, and they ſhall be to you for a crown and glory, when you ſhall be confeſſed of and by Chriſt hereafter, *Acts* 20.24. *Phil.* 1.20. *Iſa.* 45.23---25. with *Rom.* 14.11. *Mat.* 10.32.

QUEST. V.

Before whom are we to confeſs Chriſt?

WHether we may or ſhould confeſs Chriſt before God his Father, and before the holy Angels, as he alſo will confeſs us, is not the intent of this *Queſtion*; but before what *men*

we

we ſhould confeſs Chriſt. Here know, that (1) Men are of a different conſideration, according to their different capacities and conditions. Some men are only in a *private* capacity, others are in a *publick* capacity and authority. (2) And as this Authority is twofold, either 1. Civil; or 2. Spiritual and Eccleſiaſtical: So alſo this publick capacity of men may be differenced into that which is 1. *Civil*; and 2. that which is *Spiritual* and *Eccleſiaſtical*. In that capacity (in their circuits & limits of government) are *Magiſtrates* both *Supreme and Subordinate*: In this capacity are *Miniſters* (in their reſpective limits of government) in the *Churches* of Jeſus. (3) The conditions of men are alſo different; 1 Some are *within* Chriſt, 2 Others are *without* Chriſt. (4) And of theſe 1. Some *manifeſt hopes*, that they will do us or it *no harm*, and (perhaps) that we may do them *ſome good*. 2. Others *manifeſt hardneſs*, and ſuch as prevents our hopes of doing good hereby to their perſons, and perſwades our hearts of their deſigning evil (by occaſion of this) to our perſons, and likewiſe (it may be) to our profeſſion.

Prop. 1. The *Negative* in confeſſion, that we do not *deny* Chriſt, is our duty before any man or men, of whatſoever capacity or condition; be he or they never ſo bitter Perſecutors, never ſo abominable prophane. It runs without exception, either as to time, or place, or perſon, *If we deny him, he alſo will deny us*, Mat. 10. 33. 2 Tim. 2. 12. Thereof is no remedy, without repentance. We may not deny Chriſt then before any, either orally in words, or really in works. (1) Not *orally* or in *words*, whether 1 *Explicitely*, as *Peter* and the Jews did, *Mat. 26. 69. ad finem. Acts* 3. 13, 14. Oh! how dear it coſt both him and them, in the Scriptures mentioned! 2 Or *Implicitely*, as did thoſe ſenſual *Separatiſts* in *Jude* and *Peters* times, by *doctrines of licentiouſneſs*, Jude *v.* 3, *&c.* 2 Pet. 2. 1, &c. Oh! what black and dreadful marks and brands thoſe bleſſed Apoſtles have left upon ſuch men! (2) We may not *really* or in *works* deny Chriſt: Such there have been, and yet are, *who profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him: Abominable they are, diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*, Tit. 1. 16. Thus

1. We

1. We may not *do* what is *contrary* to the duty he commands, or the doctrines we confess, and so cause others to dishonor or deny Christ, through our defection and disobedience. A blasphemous evil, and beyond excuse! *Ezek* 36 20,23. 2 *Pet.* 2,1,2,3. *Rom* 2. 1,23,24. See *Quest.* 7. *Propos.* 3.

2. Nor may we *decline* a clear and confessed duty before men, especially that is such in the *eye of adversaries*, and is *evident* by the *light of Nature*. This were to *deny the faith*, as the Apostle determines, *to do and be worse then infidels*. Look to it, ye that profess the Name of Jesus; be punctual not only in *first Table*, in religious duties, but in *second Table* duties, of *righteousness*, especially in *relative* duties: by neglect of, especially by any notorious violation of these, how is the Name of God and his Doctrine blasphemed! 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *&* 6. 1. *Tit.* 2. 5. Look to it in *religious* duties also, especially such as are *plain* and peremptory, and you assert due from you, by the orall professions you make: Rather then decline preaching and prayer, the open dues from them in their holy confession to their Lord and Master, the *Apostles* will be dragg'd from *preaching* to *prisons*, and *Daniel* be delivered into the Lions den, *Acts* 5. 18. *ad finem*. *Dan.* 6. 10--18.

Prop 2. We must *positively* confess Christ, before *Magistrates* when we are *called* before them, and *questioned* herein by them. Now (1) we have the *example* and precedent of Christ before us: 'Tis true, he held his peace, and answered nothing, when neither *piety*, *justice* nor *charity* required it of him; specially when the questions which were propounded him, were either *curious* or *captious*, or but of a *civil* import and cognizance: yet in questions that *meerly* concerned Religion, he declined not to declare himself in *direct* and *expressive* terms to the Rulers that examined him, *Mat.* 26. 62--64. *Luke* 23. 9. *Mar.* 15. 2, 5. and so, *witnessed a good confession* both *before Pontius Pilate* and the high Priest, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. *Mar.* 14. 61, 62. Be you *followers of Christ*, you cannot write after a fairer copy. (2) We have his ingagement and precept upon us, *to give every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us*, much more to the *eminentest* among men, as the Ma-

Magiſtrate is: therefore our Lord and Maſter ſpecially leſſons us herein, as concerns the Civil Magiſtrate, 1 *Pet.* 3.15. *Lu.* 12. 3,4,5, 8,11. Open your mouths boldly then, when you are brought before them in the cauſe of their and your ſouls, and of God your Saviour, and *make it manifeſt as you ought to ſpeak*. His command is enough to warrant and bear you out, *Eph* 6.20. *Col.* 4.4. *Acts* 5.29. (3) We have the *inſurance* of his *preſence* with us; he is ingaged by promiſe to give in *ſpecial* help, eſpecially in ſuch exigencies; and bids us fear not, *it ſhall be given us in that ſame hour what we ſhall ſpeak, when we are brought before Governors and Kings for his Names ſake*, Mat. 10 18--20. Luke 12.11,12. and ſhall we diſappoint him of the end and ſcope, or diſtruſt the faithfulneſs and fulfilling of his Promiſe?

Prop. 3. We muſt poſitively confeſs Chriſt, before our *Miniſters* and *Paſtors*, eſpecially when they inquire into, and would be informed in our *ſpiritual* eſtates and skill in the *myſteries of Chriſt*, for the furtherance of our ſpiritual advantage, and of their accounts for ſouls: For (1) They are *intruſted* by Chriſt to *ſearch and try our wayes*, to *overſee*, and *ſee into*, and *know* the ſtate of their flocks and our ſouls, *Jer* 6.27 *Act.* 20 28 *Prov.* 27.23. And ſhall *Chriſt* loſe the end of his *Ordinance*, and they the ſignal inſtrument of *their Office*? Shall we cheerfully accept and anſwer the queſtions our Lawyer puts us to in the Title, or as concerns the tenure of our lands, *&c.* and ſhall we be only averſe to what concerns our ſouls, and the life that is eternal? or only not anſwer thoſe who are *over us in the Lord*, and in his *ſtead*? Nay, *receive them, and you receive him; reject them, and you reject him*, 1 Theſ 5.12. 2 Cor. 5. 20. Lu. 9 48. & 10.16. (2) They have *inquired* into the knowledge and ſtate of the ſouls committed to them accordingly, and have counted it as no mean part of their charge, and that which would miniſter very much to their own comfort, and the edification of others, among, or unto whom they have miniſtred, *Col* 4 7,8 1 *Theſ.* 3.5, 6. *Phil.* 2.19. (3) This hath been *entertained* by, and in the moſt *ſignal Churches*, as *Philippi*, *Coloſſe*, and *Theſſalonica*, (in the Scriptures mentioned) and by the moſt *ſignal Confeſſors*: *Hezekiah*

ſuffers

ſuffers himſelf to be ſtrictly queſtioned, and ſharply chid by *his ſubject*, but *Gods ſervant* Iſaiah, and in a matter that at firſt ſight ſeemed but *civil*, Iſa. 39. 3. *ad finem*. *David* had three Seers, *Nathan*, *Gad* and *Jeduthun*, and accepts of their ſevere inſpection, and ſharp rebukes, with much affection, 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. & 24. 11. 2 *Chr* 35. 15. Are we *greater* then they, to refuſe the perſonal inſpection and inſtruction of Gods Miniſters? were not they *better* then we, to receive and rejoyce in it? ſhould we content our ſelves in being *leſs good*, ſuppoſing the beſt, that our ſtate is not wholly bad? (4) This is *injoyned* by Chriſt, if not *expreſly* and in terms, yet in *effect* and truth: Should you not *obey them that have the rule over you? for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you*, *Heb.* 13. 17. Lo, this is their work, and it is for your welfare, and ſhall they yet finde you unwilling, wayward, wilful? If their inquiries be to *wreſt out your civil ſecrets*, *&c.* be ſilent, or ſpeak in their reproof; but if their inquiries be limited to their *work* and *watch for ſouls*, you muſt *ſubmit*. Let me cloſe this with that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12, 13. *We beſeech you brethren to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and to eſteem very highly in love for their works ſake.*

Prop. 4. We muſt *poſitively* confeſs Chriſt to ſuch as are *within* him, though in a *private* capacity, when and as often as we ſhall know it will conduce to *their edification* in him, and to *his exaltation* by them. In which caſe, *David* doth not only impart his incomes from, and experiences of Chriſt to them, but invites them in, to come and hear him; *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul*, Pſ. 66. 16. & 34 2---9. (1) We are indebted herein by the *communion of Saints*, which gives us an intereſt in each others gifts and graces, for our mutual faith, and furtherance in comfort and holineſs, *Rom.* 1. 11, 12, 14. 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22. *Col.* 2. 19. (2) We are ingaged hereunto by the *command of our Saviour*, to edifie, exhort, excite, quicken, comfort, perſwade, and *provoke one another to love and good works, building up our ſelves in our moſt holy faith*, 1 Theſ 5. 11, 14 Col. 3. 16. Heb.

Heb. 10. 23, 24. Jude 20. (3) And by the *common end* of all gifts, of knowledge and utterance, which are all for *profiting withall*, and for which we must give an account, and should graciously approve our selves in the use & improvement of them, to be *good stewards of the manifold grace of God*, 1 Cor 12. 26 & 14. 12, 26. 1 Pet. 4 10.

Prop. 5. We must *positively* confess Christ also, to such as are *without* him, according to our opportunities of converse with, and of communicating the same unto them, and as their condition or conversations call for it; but especially if they ask us, and *apparently* lay no snare for us therein. Their *private* capacity may not preclude it, nor will be a plea sufficient to exempt or excuse us. For this, we have (1) Our Saviours *imitable copy* and example, both in converse with the Samaritan woman, & with others, *Joh* 4. 14--26 *& 6.* 28 *&c.* And (2) his strict *injunction and command*, *That we be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness & fear*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. As also (3) the signal *consequence* hereof may induce it, and incourage us: Who knows, whether he may be instrumental for the gaining in, and *conversion* of these souls? and so he shall increase his own spiritual good and comfort: *He that converts a sinner from the errour of his ways, shall not only save that soul from death, but shall be himself as the brightness of the firmament*, Is 5. 20 Dan. 12 3. And (4) we shall hereby justifie our own ways and Gods wisdom, to their shame, and our endevours shall not be ineffectual to us, or unacceptable to them that imployed us; but *we are a sweet savour, even in them that perish*, Mat. 10. 16. 1 Pet 3. 16. 2 Cor. 2. 15.

Prop 6. We may not *positively confess*, but should *prudently* rather *conceal* Christ before such, as being of a *private capacity*, *manifest* their own *hardness* such, that they will but mischief our *persons*, and therewith our *profession*, the more, and sooner, by and for it. (1) *Self preservation dictates* it, which is a principle ingraven in every mans nature, and is plainly enough incouraged in Scripture, when, where, and as often as self-safety may be obtained, kept and ordered, with no loss, but with gain to Gods glory; which is the present case whereunto we are speaking, *Eph.* 5. 28, 29 *Eccl* 3. 12, 13. (2) Our *Saviours prescriptions direct* it: while we

are as *sheep in the midst of wolves*, he would have us to be *wise as serpents*, to preapprehend and prevent danger; so long as the *Doves innocence* may be preserved too, in the performance of duty: He adviseth, that we *beware of men*, that when they *persecute us in this City, we flee unto another*, Mat. 10 16, 17. 23. All which bespeak it to be our prudence, and his pleasure, that we *preserve* our persons, and *reserve* our profession, when, wherein, and as often, as our good will be palpably hazarded, and his Gospel will not probably be advanced thereby, but rather prejudiced (3) Yea 'tis his stated pleasure, that we *give not that which is holy* (holy counsels, holy confessions, rebukes, &c.) *unto the dogs; neither cast our pearls before swine*, i. e. before such manifestly obdurate sinners, as will but trample them under their feet, & turn again and rent us, *Mat.* 6. 7.

QUEST. VI.

Why are we to confess Christ?

DO you expect *Rational proofs?* or *Rhetorical perswasives?* Though my penury and contractness can but ill furnish you with either, yet if you will pawse a while, and consider, you will find argument enough to induce it, and ingage you, whither soever you cast your eyes: whether upward, or downward, or backward, or foreward, or inward, or outward.

First, Look you *upward?* There are abundant inducements from God himself, from your glorified Savior, and from glorified Spirits.

1. Look ye to *God himself?* Attend a while, & consider with me. (1) Hath not God commanded it? Yea, as an homage to his Son, as an honorary for his suffering. 1 As an *homage to his Son.* God hath *said*, yea *sworn* it: *Every tongue shall confess to him*, Isa. 45. 23. Rom. 14. 11. Will you make the God of truth *false-forsworn?* Nay you cannot, but, if he may not be confessed *by* you, *actively*, he shall be confessed *on* you, and *for* you, *passively*. 2 As an *honorary for his sufferings.* In that *he humbled himself for our sake, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross: therefore hath God highly exalted him, & given him a name, which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.*

And

And that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of the Father, Phil. 2. 7. to 11. Oh horrible ingratitude! if you ſtick to bear witneſs to, and make confeſſion of him, who vayled his glory, his Godhead, and did not ſtick to bear wrath, and be made a *Curſe* for you. Horrid hypocriſie! if all the creatures do (according to their capacities) adore him, and you that appropriate the name of Chriſtians will not acknowledge him.

(2) Hath not God conditionated it? Yea, that the confeſſion of Chriſt is a *condition* of life and ſalvation, is not onely intimated, *Iſa.* 45. 22, 23. but inſiſted on, *Rom.* 10. 8, 9, 10. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus thou ſhalt be ſaved, for with the mouth confeſſion is made to ſalvation.* 'Tis in vain to plead for ſalvation upon *believing* with the *mind*, if there be not confeſſion alſo with the *mouth*, in a *capable ſubject*. An *habitual* diſpoſition to confeſs *all* the known truths of Chriſt is ſtill found, in *all* ſuch as are ſaved: [1 *Jo.* 5. 10. 14. *Job* 34. 22.] And though there may be found in ſuch an actual declining of that confeſſion, they may be called to make, at ſome times, and under ſtrong tentations: (which we read to have been in *Jeremy*, and *Moſes*, as well as in *Jonah*) yet an *allowed* and *habitual* declining of, and with-drawing from the confeſſion of Jeſus, in any his *known* truths and ways, is not conſiſtent with a *ſtate* of ſalvation: For God doth not, will not *ſave* them, that go on in any *allowed* iniquity, *Pſ* 68. 21. 125. 5.

(3) Is not God celebrated or glorified by it? Yea, *if you confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord*, it is *to the glory of the Father*, Phil. 2. 11. And will you not glorifie the Father, who is ſo willing to glorifie you? and hath created and kept you for his glory, *Pſ.* 4. 3. *Iſ.* 43 7. 21. Sirs, you break all the *bonds* wherein you ſtand indebted to him, as *Creatures*, as *Men*, as *Chriſtians*, if you do not glorifie him. And you cannot glorifie himſelf, but in and through his Son Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. *Col.* 3. 17.

(4) Hath not God himſelf *confeſſed* Chriſt in a ſenſe? witneſſed and atteſted to his excellencies? (eg. by an *immediate voice* from heaven once and again, *Math.* 3. 17. 17. 5. And our Savior inſtanceth and improveth this teſtimony, *Jo.* 5. 32. 8. 18. 'O you that call God Father, why are you ſo flat? ſo fearful? ſhould you

not be *followers of him as dear children*, according to your *several* capacities and callings? *He received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory: this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*, Eph 5. 1. 2 Pet 1.17. and shall he receive no honor from you, whom he hath so richly honored?

(5) 'Tis a *glory* that God put's upon you, when he calleth you forth to confess his Son Jesus Christ. The godly have acknowledged it to be such, Jo 21.24 *Act.* 26.16, and God accounts it to be such, Joh. 1.7. *Act.* 9.15. None of the *Angels* were ever called to confess Christ, in a *passive* way, as you are, who are called to *suffer* for him: Nor any other of the *creatures* can confess him in an *active* way, as you may, who are called to speak of, and for him, and to perform reasonable service to him. Consider this: and can you be henceforth averse, to what so much concerns both your eternal glory, in the highest heavens, and your eminent glory here upon earth likewise?

H. Look you to our *glorified Savior*? Brethren,

(1) How is he *dignified*! *He hath a name above every name, he is the brightness of his Fathers glory, the express image of his person, far exalted above all principalities and powers*, &c Is he not *worthy* of your witnessing to? Is there any *cause* of *shame* as to *him*? Or *covert* for *silence* as to *you*? Where can you match me with such matter of confession and for celebration. Lo, *the thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand*, that are saying with loud acclamations: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing*, &c. *Rev.* 5. 11, 12, 13. 4, 11.

(2) How he is *described*! *The witness, the faithful witness, the faithful and true witness*, *Rev.* 1.5. 3.14. He faithfully declared the *whole* will of his Father, that was requisite for us, either to know, or do, in order to our *happiness*. Jo. 15.15. *Heb* 3.2. And can we preachers, or people, unfaithfully detain what is due from us, to acknowledge, to his *honor*? especially when our own *happiness* is bound up therewith also. His *followers* are described by their *faithfulness*, and by *having his Fathers name written* (not

in

in their backs, or in their breasts, or in their hands, more occultly; but) *in their foreheads*, more *observedly* and *openly*, and *they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*, Rev. 17.14.14.1,4.

(3) What is he *doing*! Now that he is entred to the *holiest of all*, and hath enough to take up his heart to all eternity; Yet is he *bearing our names upon his heart*, (as the high priest did the names of the tribes, upon his *breast-plate*) *for a memorial before the Lord continually*, Exod. 28.29.30. He is *now* appearing and advocating for us, to his Father, and against our accusers, *Hebr.* 6.20.9.24. 1 *Jo.* 2.1. with *Rev.* 12.10. Where is our loyalty and thankfulness? where is our love and tenderness? while so many assume the liberty of appearing *against* him, of accusing and condemning him, in his holy word, ways, and worship; that yet there are so few found, to appear *for* him, and plead his cause against the wicked; and to advocate his concernments before the world? was it so in the *primitive* times, even in the most *terrible* of *persecutions*? You know it was not: where then is your faith, love, sense, zeal, or gratitude?

(4) What a *disquisition* doth he make? True it is, that, as to his bodily presence, he is now in heaven. But his *eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men*. And if you shall deny his name, decline his truths and interest, or defile his worship and institutions, *shall he not search it out*? Yea, *he seeth it, and will requite it with his hand, his eyes are as a flame of fire*: he seeth by his *own* light (as fiery eyes are said to do) & needeth not any *forreign* light or *medium* to see, or judge by. He searcheth the inmost recesses of the heart and actions; he will easily pierce, and break thorough all those subtil coverts, and secret vails, of self-ease, sensual indulgencies, self-interest, *&c.* which men weave unto themselves, and he will burn them up. *He knoweth* his confessors in the *Asian* Churches *by name*, and signally commends them: he knoweth the careless temporizers, and *Laodicean* neuters, and severally chides and threatens them, *Rev ch.* 2 and 3.

III. Look you to the *glorified Spirits*? *Angels* and souls made perfect? Lo, there the Thrones and Crowns of, and for the true confessors. None that did ever here seal a good confession, but are:

are there *ſet down with Chriſt in his kingdom*, Rev. 3. 21. Mat. 19. 28. Yea, behold not onely the glorified condition of every true confeſſor; but how they have, and do give teſtimony to our Lord in glory, *Rev.* 19. 6, 7. 10. 6. 9. 11. Behold the Angels thoſe glorious ſpirits.

(1) How gratefully they are imployed herein, as their *higheſt work and buſineſs!* Theſe *Golden Cherubims* are ſtill, with greateſt admiration, looking on, and with greateſt affection, looking into the *ark of God*; the things of Chriſt, *which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the Goſpel unto you.* And ſhould not you then deſire to know, and devoutly acknowledge them? *Exod.* 25. 17. 33. 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. One Angel gladly publiſheth thoſe glad tydings of great joy: *And ſuddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſing God and ſaying: Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good will towards men*, Lu. 2. 10, 13, 14.

(2) How gladly they eſteem hereof, as of *happieſt worth and bleſſedneſs.* They *reſt not day and night, ſaying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come: But are ſtill breathing out their Heſannahs, and Hallelujahs: Bleſſing, and honor, and glory, and power, for ever and ever, Hallelujah, and Amen, Hallelujah*, Rev. 4. 8. *ad finem* 5. 8. *ad finem* 19. 1, 3, 4, &c. Ah Sirs! how much more are *we* indebted, and ingaged! Did Chriſt take on him the *nature* of *Angels*? or came he to take away the *ſin* of *Angels*? or to transfer *Salvation* upon *Angels*? Grant that the *elect* Angels received benefit by Chriſt. But were *they* redeemed from death, from hell by him? were *they* brought out of the hands of wrath & juſtice by him? were *they* brought from under the authority and vaſſalage of ſin and Satan by him? Was Chriſt made ſin for *them*? or made a curſe for *them*? or were *they* made the righteouſneſs of God in him? *&c.* No: *'twas for our ſakes that he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He was delivered for our offences, and roſe again for our juſtification. He was wounded for our iniquities, and the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him*, &c. Oh! where is our ingenuity then! What monſters of ingratitude ſhall we be! If the *Angels* ſo affectionately celebrate him, and there is not *one* Angel but worſhips him; and *we alone* ſhall be averſe to confeſs him!

2. Look you *downward*? Turn your eyes from above, to things beneath. There are few objects but fit you with one Argument or other. Look you to the damned in hell? to the devils of hell? to the droves of ſinners, or to the dear Saints of our deareſt Savior, which are upon the earth?

1. Look you to the *damned* in hell? Oh! What would they *now* give for ſuch an opportunity of confeſſing, and cloſing with Chriſt, as they ſometimes loſt, but you ſtill have, and perhaps are loytering away. But alas it is *now too late for them*: See that it be not *too late for you* alſo, *Luk.* 16. 29. *ad finem.*

finem. Why were they caſt into this burning lake? But that (if they did ever hear of Chriſt) they would not accept of and acknowledge him. But either voluntarily and frowardly they did refuſe him to reign over them; or fearful and unbelieving (as they were) they would not venture to confeſs him, and faithfully continue with him, in and under the Croſs, *Jo.* 3. 18. 19. *Luk.* 19. 24. 27. *Rev.* 21. 8 *Heb.* 10. 38, 39.

II. Look you to the *Devils* of hell? Lo, theſe not onely know and believe, but have confeſſed, and born teſtimony to Chriſt: Not from *affection* to the truth; but from *anguiſh* and pre-apprehenſion of torment. *We know thee* (ſay they) *who thou art, Jeſus thou Son of the moſt high God,* Mar. 1. 24. 5. 7. Mat. 8. 29. Doth *fear* extort a confeſſion from *Devils?* and ſhall neither *faith* nor *love* extract a confeſſion from *Diſciples?*

III. Look you to the *droves of ſinners* that are upon the earth? How many thouſand are there, that yet continue in their ſins! unconvinced, unconverted, eſtranged from, and enemies to the life of Chriſt! God hath ordained your confeſſion of Chriſt, in order to their conviction and converſion. That they that are not, will not be wrought upon, by *our word,* our preaching, may yet be won by *your converſations,* by your convincing practices: Or, if not *ſaved* by them, yet (at leaſt) that they may be *ſhamed* and *ſilenced* by them, 1 *Pet.* 2. 12. 15. 3. 1. 16. *Mat.* 5. 16. Will you deny ſo righteous and ſo reaſonable a matter, when ſouls muſt elſe rue and periſh? And (happily) thoſe of your own relations, who ſhould have *glorified* God in and for you, upon *earth*: but may now *blaſpheme* God, and *curſe* you, for this your (careleſneſs, ſhall I ſay? or) cruelty in *hell.* Up therefore and be doing *What knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy huſband? Or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy wife?* thy *childe?* thy *friend?* thy *ſervant,* &c. 1 Cor. 7. 16.

IV. Look you to the *dear Saints* of Chriſt upon the earth? Are there not ſuch as are *weak* among them that *need* ſtrengthning? Such as are *wavering* that need *ſetling?* Such as will be wounded through your ſilence, and are likely to wander from the faith of God and fellowſhip of the Goſpel through your miſcarriage, in not making manifeſt the ſavour of the knowledge? Sirs, will your confeſſion of Chriſt *quicken* none? will it *confirm* none? will it *comfort* none? Or are there *none* to be quickned, confirmed, comforted? Nay, how many are there to be *excited?* how many to be *exhorted?* how many to be *edified* every where? Oh then! where is your communion of Saints? where your kindneſs for ſouls? where your comforts of love and conſolations in Chriſt? Read and remember the reiterated charges of our Savior, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 14. *Heb.* 10. 24 *Col.* 3. 16.

3. Thirdly, Look you *backward?* To the practice of your Saviour? To the

the precedency of his Saints? Or to what is paſt of your ſelves?

I. Look you to the *practice of our Savior?* What a *good confeſſion did he witneſs before* Pontius Pilate, 1 *Tim.*6.13. Chriſtians, he hath gone before you: he hath given you an *example*: he tells his accuſers, Judge, and all: *To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth,* Jo. 18.37. O you, that *ſay you abide in Chriſt,* ſhould you not be, and behave your ſelves in this world, as he was, and did, in all *imitable* vertues and actions? and will you loſe the *end* of your birth, of your being, of your reaſon, diſcourſe, ſpeech, in not glorifying God, and withal lye ſo miſerably ſhort of the example of our Savior, which his own hand hath wrought, to bring us unto God, *Jo.* 2.6 4.17. 1 *Pet.*2.21.

II. Look you to the *precedency of the Saints?* how many bold, and bleſſed confeſſors have you, the old Teſtament and new Teſtament over! The time would fail me, to tell you of all the holy Apoſtles, and Prophets, and people of all capacities and callings, *which kept the commandments of God, and held the teſtimony of Jeſus:* Lo, *one hundred forty and four thouſand, ſtanding with him upon mount Sion, having his Fathers Name written in their foreheads, i. e.* whoſe profeſſion of godlineſs was viſible, open, and conſpicuous, *Rev* 12.17 14.1. Gird up the loynes of your mind, then. A *Saint!* A *Chriſtian!* and *aſhamed* or *afraid* to confeſs Chriſt! how unlike is it to the *ſpirits* of the *ſaints,* that breathed in the primitive times and ſtories! Thoſe *offered themſelves* frequently to the teſt, and to the tormentors. They *loved not their lives to the death,* their liberties to bands, and *ſuffered joyfully the ſpoyling of their goods, Rev.* 12.11. *Act.* 20.23,24. *Hebr.* 10.34. What mean theſe ſubterfuges, and ſhifting fetches, that ſhyneſs, and ſtraitning fear, which ſo holder oppreſs you! Come, ſhew your ſelves *men,* if not *Saints.* Yea, *be followers of them, who through faith and patience, do inherit the promiſes,* Hebr.6. 12.

III. Look you to what is *paſt of your own ſelves?* Remember that time, when you were without Chriſt. Oh! How long! How long did ye outſtand his calls? oppoſe his commands, cauſe, and concerns in the world? oppreſs your own Spirits? and offend his holy Spirit? Brethren, ſhould not the *time paſt ſuffice you?* ſhould you not ſtudy to repair his honor, and right holineſs, as much as in you lieth? 1 Pet 4.1. *Rom.*6 19. If you are indeed, in Chriſt, let your *ſtrict* confeſſions *now*, make ſome amends for your *looſe* converſations *then.* Though you cannot *intrinſecally* repair his honor you may and ſhould *extrinſecally.* *Paul* was not ſo eminent a *perſecutor*, but he willingly becomes as eminent a *profeſſor*, when the power of transforming grace hath once paſt upon him. He had *lived more adverſly* to Chriſt, then *all before* his converſion, and *labors more abundantly for* Chriſt then they *all after* his converſion, 1 *Cor.*15 9,10.

Fourthly,

4. 5. Fourthly, look you *forward*? Oh! how will the confession of Christ be reciprocated and rewarded! How will the contrary thereunto be reciprocated and revenged!

I. First, How will your confession of Christ be *reciprocated* and *rewarded! confesse him*, and *he will confesse you*; confesse him on *earth*, and he will confesse you in *heaven*; confesse him before *men in your day*, and he will confesse you before *men*, before *Angels*, and before his *father*, *in his day* [*Mat.* 10. 32. *Rev.* 3. 5. *Luke* 12. 8.] *Plead his cause*, and he will *plead yours*; vindicate *His* Name, and he will vindicate *Yours*, contend for him, and he will contend for you, and contend against them that contend against you. [*Isai.* 35. 51. *Lam.* 3. 58. *Isa.* 49. 25. 51. 22.] Sirs, how would you, that Christ should carry it towards you, when he cometh in his glory? Would you be cleared and confessed by him then? would you, that he acquit, acknowledg, and approve you then? As ever you would be found on his side *then*, with the *glorified comprehensors in patriâ*, fall in with his side *now*, amongst the *gracious Confessors in viâ*.

II. Secondly, how will the contrary be *reciprocated* and *revenged! Deny him*, and he will *deny you*; deny him before men on *earth*, and he will deny you before the *Angels* of God, and before his *Father* in *heaven*. [2 *Tim.* 2. 12. *Mat.* 10. 33. *Luke* 12. 9.] Are you ashamed of him? he also will be ashamed of you; *If you are ashamed of him and his words in this adulterous and sinful generation, he also will be ashamed of you, when he cometh in his own glory, and in his Fathers, and in the holy Angels* [*Mark* 8. 38. *Luke* 9. 26.] He will admit no claim of theirs to him then, who will not assert his claime to them now; but will abandon them for ever, with an, *I never knew you*. [*Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *Luke* 13. 27.

5. 6. Fifthly, look you *inward*?

I. First, for this, are all those holy principles from God imparted to you, and his holy and pure Law imprinted within you. [*Psalm* 40. 8, 9, 10.] There is not one *talent*, but is to trade with. Holy faith, hope, love, *&c.* are all for exercise, and imployment, and so for evidence to the praise and honour of the giver, though not for popular ostentation by the *user*. All the *fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God*, [Phil. 1. 11.] True

grace is compared to *light*, to *fire*, &c. which are not only communicative of their vertues, but carry a self-evidence. Love and faith are not without their evident *works* and *labour*, and *become effectual by the acknowledging every good thing* [Rom. 13.12. *Psal.* 39.3. 1 *Thes.* 1.3. *Philem.* 5.6.] Can you then believe in Christ with your hearts, and not confesse Christ with your mouths? These two are connexed [*Rom.* 10.9,10.] Can there be hope in you, and you abide wholly careless, to render a reason of it, when thereunto required, and the object of your hope will be thereby also honoured? 1 *Pet.* 3.15.

II. Secondly, upon this the holy presence and inhabitation of God is insured to you, *Whosoever shall believe and confesse that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*, 1 John 4.15. O sweet promise! O the signal priviledge of sincere professors! God and the godly confessour have a mutual *cohabitation* with one another; a mutual *inhabitation* in one another. Every new act of your holy confession will be a new advance in this happy communion. Now ordinarily is the most soul-enriching intercourse with God, and the most soul-ravishing illapses from God; even to *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, [1 Pet. 1.6,7,8.] Now it was that *Stephen saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.* And that he said to others, *Behold, I see the heavens opened*, &c. Now when the showers of stones (like a storm of haile) fell upon this holy Confessour, who was yet, *full of the holy Ghost, and of power*, Act. 7.55,56.

III. Thirdly, to this all those holy *relations*, whereinto you are called, ingage you: You are his *subjects*, his *servants*, nay his *friends*, his *brethren*, his *bride*: Who should witnesse to and for him, if you do not? *You are my witnesses, saith the Lord*, Isa. 43.10. Sirs, you are nearest related to him, of all the world; May I not say to you, in the words of *Pilate*, *Behold your King*; Treason of the deepest dye, to say with those wicked Jews! *Away with him, away with him, and crucifie him*, rather then adventure to confesse him [*John* 19.14,15.] Behold your *master*, your *friend*, that *calls you not henceforth servants* (i.e. comparatively, not so much servants as friends) *for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth; But*, saith he, *I have called you friends*, [John 15.15.] What! and yet loath to confesse him!

him! Where is the loyalty of a ſervant? Where is the love and ingenuity of a friend? Behold your *elder brother*; one that is not *aſhamed to call you brethren*, though lifted up to the throne, far above all principality and power [*Heb.*2.11,12.] And are you aſhamed to call him brother, that yet lie upon the dung-hill. In ſhort, Behold your beloved *husband, you are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones*: *This is a great myſtery.* How ſhould your thoughts be taken up in expatiating touching his honour, and your happineſſe! How ſhould your tongues be tuned to the imblazoning of his excellencies! How ſhould you tell every one that asketh you, in the language of the ſpouſe [*Cant.*5.9 *ad finem*] *He is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, he is altogether lovely — This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem.*

6. Sixthly, and laſtly, look you *outward*? behold, the ſpirit of glory reſts upon you, the ſequel will be victory to you; you are ſecured in your lives, till you have finiſhed your teſtimony, and ſecured in your liberties, ſo far, as it may further your teſtimony.

I. Firſt, The ſpirit of glory reſts upon you, while you are vilified for your teſtimony. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are you, for the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you; On their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified* [1 *Pet.*4.14] You may bind ſuch contumelies to you, as a crown of glory, and as a Diadem of beauty. Tis a *grace*, a *great grace*, that is put upon you [*Phil.*1.7. *Acts* 4. 33] Others *curſes* do but contribute to your *bleſſedneſs*. Here Chriſt, *Bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall revile you and perſecute you; when they ſhall ſeparate you from their company, and caſt out your name as evil, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you, falſly for my ſake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad*, &c. *Rejoyce and leap for joy*, &c. Mat.5.11,12. Luke 6.22,23.

II. Secondly, The ſequel will be victory to your teſtimony, if not a vindication of your ſelves too: Oh the ſucceſſion of conqueſts which have been made, down along all ages, by the ſealed confeſſions of the ſacred martyrs! What acclamations are there! *victory! victory! Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt: For the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down*, &c. How *overcame* they? *By the blood of the*

Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. For they loved not their lives to the death, [*Rev.*12.11,12] True it is, that the *Christian* may *lose*, but *Christ gains*. The *confessour* falls many times in the quarrel; but the *cause riseth* by his fall. And if it cost you bonds, so Christ and his Church gave liberty, nay if it cost your *blood*; so these *live* by your *death*, you have lain in prison, and presented your lives in martyrdom, to good purpose.

Farther it may be attended with your *vindication* also. *Philadelphia kept his word, and denied not the name of Christ. Therefore* (saith he) *Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan* (*which say they are Jews, but are not; but do lie*) *I will make them to come, and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.* [*Rev.* 3.8,9] There were *white robes given, to every one of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held.* (Rev.6.) *Until the number of their brethren, which should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled,* ver.9,10,11. Let the adversary know, *they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy to Gods people* And such as cast out the holy confessors *for his name sake, saying, let the Lord be glorified,* our Lord Jesus, in his own time, shall *appear to the joy of these, and they shall be ashamed: Yea shame shall cover their faces, which said unto these, where is the Lord your God,* Isa 26.11. 66.5. *Mic* 7 8,9,10.

III. Thirdly, You are secured in your lives, till you have finished your testimony: You are *immortal*, till your witnesse is delivered, and your work is *done*: And who can desire to live longer, that liveth in and for God here, and hopeth to live with God in glory hereafter, when he hath finished his work, he had to do in grace. 'Tis said, when *the two witnesses had finished their testimony, then* (and not till then) *the beast that ascended out of the bottomlesse pit overcame, and killed them,* Rev.12.7. They never *fell* till their testimony was *finished*. O ye believers, the year, month, week, day, hour of your end or death, and of effectiug their design is under a divine limit: When our Saviour taught in the *Treasury*, and there in to the very teeth of his adversaries, so that they might have easily taken him (in the eye of second causes) and by wicked hands, have slain him; yet as full of enraged malice as they were; *no man*

laid hold on him. Why? what was the reason? 'Tis immediately subjoyned: *For his hour was not yet come*, John 8.20. But when that *hour* once came, they forthwith laid hands upon him, and led him away to *Caiaphas*, and so to crucifying, *Luke* 22.53,54.

Fear not them then, which can kill the body, so as to flee, or forbear thy duty: For, besides that, *they have no more that they can do* [Luke 12.4] they are under an almighty restraint in this also. The daies and accidents of your lives, yea, *the very hairs of your heads are all numbred*; Not only the essential, or integral parts of his confessours, but the very *excrementitious* are under the lock and key, the care and custody of their Lord Christ [*Job* 14.5. *Luke* 12.7. *Mat.* 10.30.] And when you have finished your course, and filled up your confession: let the enemy *kill* you, he cannot *hurt* you. He shall but let your soul out of *prison*, which is therewith, immediately let into his *presence*, who forthwith crowns his faithful confessours, with a *crown of righteousness*, 2 Tim. 4.7, 8. Phil. 1. 20, 21, 23.

IV. Fourthly, You are secured in your libertie too, so far, as it will further your testimony. And can you reasonably expect, or religiously endeavour more? So long as liberty will best serve the *ends*, for which you were made, are maintained, or new-made, you shall be sure to have it, *i.e.* so long as it will be most useful for you to serve God by it. He ensured *Paul* as much [*Acts* 18.9,10. 23.10,11. 26.16,17] And you may by faith warrant your interest in the *same promises*, as far as concerns the same profession, and your continued preservation will best promote the same ends. The *particular* security, or promise to *Joshua*, is applied as of *general* extent, to all that professe and imbrace Jesus. [*Josh.* 1. 5. *Heb.* 13. 5] Nay, the more eminently, you keep up the *life of profession*, the more indearedly, will he keep the *liberty of your persons*, as it may and will best subserve the same, in a loose and perverse generation. You have his promise, *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of tentation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them, that dwell upon the earth*, [Rev. 3.10] Away with your fears then, and act faith. *The gates of hell*, all the united power and policy thereof, shall never be able to prevail against

gainst sincere profession, though they may sharplie persecute it. [*Mat.*16.18] Nor, Satan himself, nor any his subtilest and strongest agents and instruments can touch, either your *selves* or *states*, till God *suffereth* it, whose glory you are pleading for, and whose Gospel you professe. They cannot move one *link* further, then he lets them out the chain, in whose hands it is, [*Rev.* 20. 1, 2. *Job* c. 1, and 2]

'Tis true, your *profession* may cost some of you a *prison*: But your denial of him will cost you *perdition*, cost you *hell*. And what is a prison with Gods presence, and for professing Jesus. 'Tis a prison perfumed, *&c.* 'Tis a palace, 'tis a paradise, 'tis a living extasie, a lower heaven, a little embleme of the liberties of eternitie, if you will believe the experiences of Gods prisoners. In brief, Though the devil may make you of *professours*, *prisoners*; Yet the Lord (whose prisoners you are) orders out every *circumstance*, *whom*, *where*, *when*, *how long*, &c. and over-rubs all issues, and emergencies, to the greater advantage of his truth, and of your testimonie, to the greater advancement and accesse of light and libertie to his Gospel, and to the greater approbation, as well as probation of you his prisoners [*Rev.*2.10. 1 *Pet.*1.7. *Phil.*1.12,13, 14.] Sirs, If you are in good earnest *Christians*, you have enough not only to quicken; but to content and quiet you when distracted and discomposed; to give courage and cheerfulnesse, when drooping and despondent. Shake off all discouragements then; *Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong: The Lord is with you, while you be with him. And if ye seek him, he will be found of you, But if ye forsake him, he will forsake you,* 1Cor. 16.13. 2 *Chron.*85.2.

The

The ſeventh QUESTION.
When are we to confeſſe Chriſt?

THe ſorts of Confeſſion, and ſeveral capacities of perſons, by and before whom this confeſſion is to be made (which have been premoniſhed, *qu.*3,4 5.) are of *proper conſideration* here alſo. I ſhall only adde thereunto (1) That this confeſſion may be conſidered, either 1. *Diſpoſitivelie*, as it is *within*, in the *inward diſpoſition*; Or, 2. *Declarativelie*, as it is, or ought to be without, in the outward *declaration*. (2) This queſtion concernes the *time*, *when* we are to make confeſſion; and ſo *comprehends* within our *deliberation*, both 1. The *time whereupon* we are *caſt*; and 2. The *time*, *wherein* we are *called*, to the confeſſion of Chriſt. And indeed, that we may the more diſtinctlie know the time, wherein we are called to confeſſe Chriſt, we are the more deliberatelie to conſider the times, whereupon we are caſt, and thoſe choicer *ends*, whereunto as a means, our confeſſion of Chriſt is ordained, and appointed, and how it may, and will beſt ſerve and *conduce* to thoſe ends. (3) The times whereupon we are, or may be caſt, either give *countenance* to what we are to confeſſe of Chriſt; or elſe give *check* unto it; and this, either in regard of the *corruptions* and *ſins*, which *appear*, or in regard of the *calamities* and *ſufferings*, which *attend* it. (4) Of the *corruptions* I ſhall name but a *few*. Perhaps it is a time, wherein Chriſtians are careleſſe of confeſſing Chriſt; or cold in their confeſſions; or they *caſt off* the *matters* of faith and worſhip which they ſhould confeſſe, and *cover*, and vaile this over, with excuſes and apologies. (5) The calamities that do, or may attend our confeſſion, are, either 1. *Impendent* over, and threatned to us; 2. Or are *inflicted*, and have already taken hold of us. (6) The *ends* of confeſſion are, 1. The *glory of God and our Saviour*, Phil. 2. 11. Phil. 1. 20. *The growth of his Goſpel*, 1 Cor. 9 23. 3. *The good of ſouls*, not only our own, but others, for the *convincing* and *converting* of the foes of Chriſt, [2 *Pet.* 3. 15, 16. 2. 12.] For the confirming and comforting of the friends of Chriſt.

2 *Cor.*

2 *Cor.* 1. 6. *Phil.* 1. 7 (7) Upon the whole, I lay, the *negative* in confession is *due* from us to Christ at all times; the *affirmative* not without some *difference*. Concerning which, consider the ensuing Propositions.

Prop. 1. There is no time wherein we may *deny* Christ, or any of his Concernments; be the time never so Corrupt, never so Calamitous [See *Ch.* 5. *prop.* 1.] That we *denie* not Christ is a *negative* precept, and therefore binds us *alwaies, and to all waies*. There is no time, wherein it is not our *duty* to forbear the denying of Christ; there is no time wherein *it* may be *done*, or *he denied*; no not in any *kind*, or to any *degree*; neither in the *will*, or mind within; or by *word* of mouth, or anie other way of manifestation without, whether *explicitlie*, or *implicitlie*. And so (1) There is no time wherein we may *denie anie of that truth*, which Christ hath *revealed* for us to *believe*. *We may do nothing against the truth, but must do all things for the truth* [2 Cor. 13. 8] We must *buy the truth* at any rate, whatever it *cost* us; but may not *sell the truth* at any rate, whatever it will *yield* us [Prov. 23. 23.] Thus much the *anointing teacheth us, which is truth, and is no lie*, 1 Joh. 2. 27. (2) There is no time wherein we may *denie anie of that good*, which Christ hath *required* us to *do*. As we love him, or would have him to love, and live in us, we must *do*, and may not *depart* from *any of his Commandments*; *by turning aside, either to the right hand, or to the left*. [John 14. 15, 21. Deut. 5. 32. 11. 8, 22] (3) There is *no time* wherein we may *denie* that to be an *evil*, or adventure to do it, which he hath required us, as sinful, in its own nature, *to decline*. No *suffering* may put us upon *sinning*, or will be a sufficient plea for the *same*. If you *call evil good, or good evil; put darkness for light, or light for darkness*; *Wo to you* [Isa. 5. 20. Mic. 3. 2.] There may be no *evil* committed, that *good* may come. In short, you may not *commit the least transgression*, were it to *keep off the greatest tribulation*; But must much sooner *choose* the *furnace* of *suffering*, then *close* with the *flatteries* of *sinning*. [Rom. 3. 8. Job 36. 21. Dan. 3. 14. —— 19.]

Prop.

Prop. 2. There is no time, wherein you may *diſſemble* in the concerns of Chriſt, what ever be the *ſins* that *abound*, or *ſufferings* that do *attend*. This is no ſmall degree of *denial*, and being a *negative* precept alſo, (as that is) binds us (as that doth) both at, and *to all times*. True it is, there is a time for *ſuſpenſion of* our confeſſion; of which hereafter, *Prop.* 5. but there is no time for *ſimulation*, (*properly* ſo called) *in* our confeſſion. We *may*, yea *muſt*, deal *prudently*; but may not, muſt not *diſſemble in piety*, *Math.* 10. 16. Be you *wiſe unto that which is* good; but ſimple, ſincere, innocent, inoffenſive, blameleſs, harmleſs, (ἀμέμπτοι, ἀκέραιοι) *concerning evil*, Rom. 16. 19. Phil. 2. 15. 'Tis not for you to caſt a *veile* of *deceit*, or *diſſimulation* before the eyes of *men*, (before the eyes of *God* you cannot) or to handle this work, and the word of God *deceitfully*, and in *guile*. Your converſation herein may not be with *fleſhly wiſdom*: But in *Simplicity*, and *godly ſincerity* 2 Theſ. 3. 3--6. and 2 Cor. 2 17. 1. 12. Set me inſtance in matters of *faith*, which take up our *oral* confeſſion, and in matters of *worſhip*, which moſtly take up our *real* confeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt.

1. Firſt, we may not in the confeſſion of Chriſt, *diſſemble in matters of Faith*. As there was *no guile found* in the *mouth* of our *Savior*, ſo neither may there be in the *mouth* of his *Saints*: Himſelf hath ſtated this, as needful to our ſalvation, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. 3. 10 *Pſa.* 34. 12, 13. Both the *Doctrine*, and *grace* of *faith*, is charactered by the Apoſtle to be, ἀνυπόκριτος, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. 2 *Tim* 1. 5 *unfeigned*, or as the ſame word is rendred, *Rom.* 12. 9. *without diſſimulation*. We are called to a *plain* confeſſion of our Faith in Jeſus, and may not ſeek the *covers* of *Ambiguous* and *oracular* words and phraſes, or cloth the *chaſte* and *holy* faith and verities of Chriſt, with the *meretricious* terms of the *heathen* or *heretick*, that examines us, and think to make it up, by an *after ſalvo* of *diſtinctions*. If ſuch *frauds* in matters of *faith* might be paſſable, what *fools* were our Marian Martyrs, to deal ſo openly in the points of *merit*, *ſatisfaction*, *real preſence*? &c. who could not but know, that thoſe *terms* might receive a conſtruction, that comported with the *ſenſe* of *Proteſtants*, as well as *Papiſts*: But thoſe *holy men of God* had

better studied the *simplicity* of the Gospel, then that their confession should be in deceit, or guile; according to the blessed pattern of their precious Savior, and his Proto-martyr *Stephen.* They therefore used *great playness of speech*, and durst not (to preserve themselves from the fire) prostitute the faith to the flouts and scorns of adversaries, *Joh.* 18.37. *&c. Acts* 7. and 2 *Cor.* 3.12.

Question. *May we not then elude the adversary, that examineth us by* equivocal *phrases, or some such* equivocating *passages, when* playness *of expression will certainly infer danger to us?*

Answer. Though you may decline their questions, and *divert* their discourse into another channel, as Christ did, when *private* persons did endeavor to intrap him by *insnaring* questions; and should use your best *Christian* wisdom, when *you are called before Governors for his names sake*, as himself directs you, for anticipating dangers, *Matth.* 19.3. *&c* 21.23. *&c* 22.15. *&c.* 10 16. *&c. Yet*, you may not, to escape the hazard you may (not without cause) *fear*, *elude* or *equivocate* in the *faith* which you are called to declare. You may not by equivocal expressions to the *prejudice* of truth, prevent the trials, which are probably not far off. This were to *imitate*, rather *Satans enticements*, then your *Saviors examples*, Gen. 3 5. and you would fall within the compass of a *lye*, of which you may not at any hand be guilty; no, not for *God*, and ill becomes a *confessor* of any man, who professeth him, that is the way, the truth, and the life: I say *a lye*, for all *equivocations* and elusions in *prejudice* of truth and justice, are a sort of lying, *Job* 13.7. *Col.* 3.9. *Isa.* 57.13. *Gen.* 3.5. with *Job.* 8.44. Again, it is true, you may so prudently improve *circumstances*, and manage your expressions in arduous cases, with that *circumspection*, as to *divide* (if possible) *the adversaries*, as *Paul* did the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, and as to *disappoint their aimes*, and detain them from a progress unto that, which is of most hazard for you to assert, as he did, by insisting *first* upon that which was *more* acknowledged, and of less hazard, as the *resurrection* was; whereby they were impli-

implicated, and he was exempted from coming up to the reſurrection of *Chriſt*, which they *jointly* oppoſed. Yea, you may ſo declare your ſelves, as they may be *deceived* as to the *temper* of your *perſon* (though not as to the *truth* of your *poſition*) and ſo be diverted from your perſecution. So *Paul* likewiſe did: But how was it? Not by the coverts of equivocal expreſsions; but by a *preſent cleerneſs*, in what was matter of controverſie among them, and by a *prudent concealment*, in what they might conjoyn againſt him; for confeſsing of which, he was not *yet called* upon by them, *Acts* 23.6---10.

We may not then indulge our ſelves a *liberty of equivocating*, or *compliance* in *expreſsion*, to the adverſaries dialect or expectation. For 1. This doth virtually ſerve the patronage of their ſin, in protecting your ſelves. And 2. Foully ſlur the evangelical perfection, together with your own profeſsion; however you may pre-apprehend a poſsibility of evading, by the door of an after expoſition, and diſtinction. Nay 3. This liberty would void the *ſcope* and *ſpirit* of confeſsion. If *ſuch ambiguities* in expreſsion, and after diſtinctions were allowable, whereof we are ſpeaking, then farewel *confeſsion*, and the *Crown of Martyrdom*. This were indeed to *cover* the faith, not to *confeſs* it. Nor were we called to *dying* for Chriſt, or to *declare* our knowledge, but to *deviſe* coverts firſt, and to *diſtinguiſh* our ſelves out of this darkneſs afterwards, when the danger is over. 4. Follow then your Saviors preſcription. Your buſineſs is not to hold forth a form of *faſe* words (ſafe to you) but to *hold faſt a form of ſound words*; and to ſpeak *ſound truths*, in *ſound terms*, and to abſtain from all appearance of evil, in *doctrinal poſitions*, as well as *dues of practice*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. Tit. 2. 1, 8. 1 Theſ. 5. 21, 22. Though *Judah* be commixt with, or caſt among *idolaters*, ſhe muſt call God no more by the word *Baali* (though it alſo ſignified *my Lord*) but *Iſhi*: becauſe *that name* was vulgarly known, to be applied to the heathen *idol*, *Hoſ.* 2. 16, 17.

We may not then *diſſemble* in *words*, nor in whatever other *way* of profeſsion, when we are called to a confeſsion of our Faith in Chriſt. Here is no allowance to *Arrius*, of the paper in his boſome,

or any of the acts of the *Priscillianists* or others, to lie behind the curtain. Such *fleshly* artifices, are *alien* from the simplicity of the Gospel, which you should observe, 2 *Cor.* 11. 33. from the self-denyal for God, which you should own, and openly practice, *Mar.* 8.34,38. In short, these *hide* faith, which you should *hold forth*, *Phil.*2.16. harm the faithful, which you should *comfort* and *build up*, 1 *Thes.*5.11. and harden the adversaries, against the honesty, and sincerity of your profession, and in their own sinful ways of persecution and perdition, whom you should labor, to convert and bring off, 1 *Pet.* 2.12.

2. Secondly, We may not, in our confession of Christ, *dissemble in the matters of his Worship*: neither by the appearance *of*, nor by our apperance *at*, an evil and idolatrous worship. For so, our *real* confession of Christ, would have no consistence, with our *oral* confession of Christ, which latter, is not only Christs pleasure, but (as I suppose) your practice. Your *works* in this case, will give your *words* the *lye*.

1 First, here may be no dissembling appearance *of* an evil, or idolatrous worship. You must abstain from the very *appearance*, Yea from *all appearance* of the *evil of sin*; though you should thereby hazard, or must therefore abide, *any evil of suffering*, 1 Thes 5.22. Hebr. 11.25. You must avoid, not only the *sins*, but the *signs*; *hating even the garment spotted with the flesh*, Jude 23.

Quest. *What appearances of evil and idolatry in worship, must be avoided by Confessors?*

Answ. Though where the *appearance of evil*, or idolatry is but *imaginary*, and founded only upon anothers ill construction, or misinterpretation; it will not *warrant* your abstinance or oversation from *that act of worship*, which is *necessary* and *commanded* of God. For then you should admit an *actual sin* in your selves, to anticipate the *appearance of sin* to others: and must omit *necessary* duties, as often as others will, or do opine and declare them to be niceties and idolatry: which is against *all obligations* both of piety, justice, and charity. *Yet*, where an appearance of evil, or idolatry

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is *real*, and flowes from the nature and condition of the act, which is *per ſe* an occaſion, either of *ſin* to your ſelves, or but of a *ſcandal tending to ſin* unto others, it worthily requires and will regularly warrant, your abſtinance from *ſuch* an act, eſpecially in the affairs of *inſtituted worſhip*, whereof God hath expreſſed the *greateſt jealouſie*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 22. *Jude* 23. *Exo* 20. 5, 6. 34. 14. (1) This is *fitly inſtanced againſt* by the Apoſtles, in his reſolves upon the caſe, touching meats offered to idols. Chriſtians might not eat of them, *in the idols example*, nor with idolaters, *in their religious feaſts*: for this was an *appearance* of idolatry, flowing from the *nature* of the action, and was ſcandalous *per ſe*, tending to the countenance of the idol, to the confirming of the idolater, to the corrupting of the infirm Chriſtian, to communicate herein againſt his conſcience. And therefore they muſt not comply in the caſe, as ever they would have communion with Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 8. 10. *&c.* 10 20, 21, 22, 28. But they might eat of the *ſame numerical meats*, when they were *bought in the ſhambles, or brought forth at a private civil feaſt*, without ſcruple of conſcience, as far as concerned *themſelves*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 25, 26, 27. (2) This is *formally interdicted* you, in all the *lawes*, that inhibit *ſcandal*, or laying a ſtumbling block in your brothers way, 2 *Cor.* 6. 3. *Rom.* 14 and 15. 1 *Cor.* 8. and 10. For in this caſe you *actively* concur to, or *give* the ſcandal, which the others *take*: Whoſe *rule* is, to *give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God*, verſe 32. (3) You ſhall *virtually incur* the breach of *that Commandment*, which forbids the evil and idolatrous it ſelf. For the ſame command, which prohibits you any *ſinful act* (according to the *comprehenſive* intent and import thereof, which is *exceeding broad*) forbids the ſeveral *cauſes, occaſions, incentives* and provocations thereunto, together with the *ſhews and appearances* thereof, as is agreed by Expoſitors of the Commandments, and is warranted by the explication of *Chriſt* himſelf, in his Sermon on the mount, *Pſal.* 119 96. *Deut.* 12. 30, 31, 32. *Math.* 5. 12.--29. And I hope you do not think the *tranſgreſſion* or *terrors* of the *ſecond* Commandment ſmall (to which the ſin of idolatry appertaineth),

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and above which, above *all* other, God hath hung a *fiery flaming sword, which turns every way*, to keep the purity of his instituted worship.

It may not be expected, that I should exhibit a bill of particulars, upon this *case*, wherein we may not semblably conform to the idolatrous *Papists*, or wherein neither we, nor they, may symbolize, or correspond in worship, with the idolatrous *Pagans*. For this consists not with my design of brevity, I should onely adde three things. (1) There may be *no act*, carrying an apparent semblance of any evil or idolatrous worship *done by us*. God chargeth his people, *that they shall not herein do, like the idolatrous heathens, that were round about them*, 2 Kings 17. 15. How memorable and invitable to this purpose, are the instances of *Eleazar* and *Auxentius*? Who, though they might preserve their own lives and liberties, by such an *appearance of conformity*, dare not by such *hypocrites*, stain their holy profession, scandalize other professors or strengthen the hands of persecutors, by such acts as these: The one by setting the branch of a vine-tree loaden with Clusters, at the feet of *Bacchus* his *image*; the other by *using his own provision, which was lawful for him to eat, and but make, as if he did eat of the flesh of the sacrifice, commanded by the King*, 2. Mac. 6. 18. *ad finem*. (2) There may be *no allowance* of any evil, or idolatrous act of worship, *done to or for us*; which were to *partake* of this sin (if *consent* to sin, whether *antecedent* or *subsequent* gives us, as it doth, *communion* therein, *Psa.* 50. 18. *Levit.* 19. 17.) and so we *have fellowship with an unfruitful work of darkness*, which, we are faithfully to reprove, contrary to 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. *Eph.* 5. 11. The *signal* zeal of *Valentinian* (afterwards *Emperor*) I may not pass by in this particular, who when the *Priests* had besprinkled him with their *Paganish holy water*, as he passed before *Julian*, into the Temple of *Fortune*, broke off those parts of his garment, on which this water fell, and burnt with just indignation against the *Priest* himself also. (3) Such appearances seem not allowable neither, when we *do such an overt action, and yet declare other aimes and intentions*; so long as there is no *consistence*, between the *acts done*, and

and *aimes declared.* In this caſe, I know not how to acquit the *Agents*, from the guilt of *hypocriſie*; who (as to this) ſeem but too like *Ephraim*, and *Laodicea*, to be a *cake not turned*; nor *raw*, nor *roaſted*, nor *hot*, nor *cold* in religion; a temper which of all others, God moſt nauſeateth, *Hoſ.* 5. 8. *Rev.* 3. 15, 16. And their ſin ſeemeth (though ſomewhat below, yet) not much unlike theirs, who *ſware by the Lord, and by* Malcham, *and feared the Lord, and worſhipped their graven images*, Zeph. 1. 5. 2 Kings 17. 33, 41. I may not omit that of *Origen*; who, though he delivered the *palme* to thoſe that offered it to the *image* of Serapis, with this declaration of himſelf; *come and receive the boughs, not of the image but of Chriſt*; was yet cenſured for a *worſhipper* of that idol.

(1) Such covert *appearances* of idolatry and evil, are manifeſtly *diſhonorable to God* and the *religion* you acknowledge; as if he and it were not worth an open acknowledgement, or overt adventure. (2) *Diſproportionate to the relations*, which ye have aſſumed and avouch to ſtand in toward God in Chriſt; as if *he* were ſuch a *Maſter, King, Father, Husband*, or *his* were ſuch *Servants, Subjects, Sons, Spouſe*, as might well be either *aſhamed* or *afraid*, of owning his laws, obſerving his limits, of living up to his ordinances, and of leaving on, or truſting to his omnipotence. (3) Hence it cannot be but of *dangerous ſequel to your ſelves*. For *God will not be mocked. Will ye provoke the Lord to jealouſie? Are ye ſtronger then he?* Gal. 6. 7. 1 Cor 10. 22. (4) And of *diffuſive ſcandal to others!* While the *adverſaries* of truth are thereby *obdurate* in their bloody cruelty, and take occaſion to blaſpheme, and ſpeak the more reproachfully: And while the *aſſured friends* of truth are (generally) either *deſpiled* or *diſpleaſed*, drawn over to *ſin with* you; or drench'd in *ſhame and ſorrow for* your, and made to drink of contempt and ſcorn among others.

II. There may be no diſſembled appearance *at* an evil and idolatrous worſhip. This were not only to commit ſin our ſelves, but to contract the guilt of others ſins upon our own ſouls, by a palpable communion in their ſervice, by a preſent cooperation to their ſin, and by the publick countenance hereby given them. This our

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provoked God will not eaſily put up: But if we will adventure to *partake of their ſins*, he will alſo make us *partakers of their plagues*, Rom. 1. 32. Eph. 5, 6, 7. 11. Rev. 18. 4. The rather, becauſe it is, not onely a ſin againſt *his own Commands*, Exod. 20 4, 5, 6. Deut. 12. 30. 31, 32. Mic. 6. 16. but (in the preſent caſe) is connexed with the ſtifling and ſmothering of, or ſinning againſt the checks and clearneſs of *our own conſciences*, which are his *deputies* in our boſoms, *Rom.* 1. 18, 19, 28. 1 *John* 3. 20.

Queſt. *May we not be lawfully preſent at ſuch Worſhip, as our conſcience, regularly informed, tell us is evil, and eſpecially if it be idolatrous?*

Anſw. Though *every* evil in the *miniſtration* and *external modes* of Divine Worſhip, will not warrant our ſeceſſion from *it*, and from the *ſolemn aſſemblies* of Gods dear ſervants for it; as being, neither conſiſtent with *Chriſts pattern*, nor with the *Churches peace*, whoſe maladies and breaches would then be *endleſs* (whether the miniſtration be by *proper gift*, or *preſcript form*) humane frailties being conſidered: *Yet*, even ſuch *external faulty* miniſtrations ſhould be *reprehended by us* (according to our ſeveral places) although we may not therefore *rend* from the *worſhip it ſelf* which bears the impreſſion of Gods *own authority* upon it. It is requiſite, according to *preſent circumſtances*, and *your perſonal capacities, and callings*, that you *witneſs againſt thoſe*, *but* that you do not (upon this account) *withdraw from this*. Let the conſtant practice of the holy men of God, not only in the *old Teſtament*, but *new* likewiſe, be the *clue* to help you out of this *Labarinth*. When the corruptions of worſhip were but in *extrinſek modes*, or of *inferior moment* (while the *eſſentials* and *ends* thereof were neither *vacated* nor *vitiated*) they never *removed* from the worſhip it ſelf, but *reſtrained* others; Yet, ever *rebuked* theſe ſinful miniſtrations, *Heb.* 10. 25. *Jude* 19, 20. 1 *Cor.* 14. & 11. 18. *&c.* Behold your bleſſed Savior, who *declined* not the *ſolemn* worſhip of God among the *Jews*, (as being of *divine inſtitution*) which yet was then ſadly adulterated. But at the ſame time, he *decries* their *ſymbolical*

bolical Rites, and *ſuperſtitious* Uſages, (as of *humane invention*) that were annexed to, and with it: And as he did *not reject* their *Communion*; ſo he *reproved* their *Corruptions* herein, *Luke* 4. 16. *Joh.* 7. 10. 37. *Luke* 22. 7. *Mat* 8. 4 15. 1.---10. *Mark* 7. 2.--14. *Experience* and *ſenſe* tell us, that *humane miniſtrations*, even of *Divine matters*, are not ordinarily, without *humane miſcarriages*. *Reaſon* tells us humane miſcarriages, or infirmities muſt be *allowed for*. And *Religion* tells us, that humane miſcarriages, eſpecially in divine matters, muſt not be *allowed of*.

Anſw. 2. Though you may be lawfully preſent, where the *Circumſtances* & exterior miniſtration are in *ſome* things faulty, while the *ſubſtance* of the worſhip it ſelf is agreeable to the revealed will of God; yet you cannot be preſent without ſin, as concerns your ſelves the worſhippers; if your preſence thereat be *upon ſinful terms*, or *with* ſome *ſinful tranſactions*. (1) If the *terms* of your Communion therein be ſinful, *ſinfully enjoyned by others*, and *ſinfully embraced by you*. As if the *Condition* of your Communion which *they appoint*, and *you accept*, ſhould be your profeſſed or previous Conſent to the neceſſity, or legitimacy of theſe evil modes and miniſtrations. Though the *impoſition* of an indifferent circumſtance doth not *therefore illegitimate* that circumſtance, or your Compliance; yet as the impoſition of an unlawful act in worſhip (though by a lawful Authority) will not *indemnifie* your *practice* in doing it, ſo nor your *promiſe* to do it, though there ſhould be a Statute and Commandment for it, *Hoſ.* 5. 11. *Mic* 6. 16. The *condition* you have imbraced for Communion being *ſinful*, ſhould be *broken off* by inward repentance and outward reformation; your *Continuance* therein *agravates* your *ſin*, and every *new act* in fulfilling the Condition *augments your guilt*, Jer. 8. 5. Hoſ. 4. 16. *ad finem*. You may not injure Chriſt and your own Conſciences then by *yielding* to ſuch Conditions In *ſuch a Conformity* you will be *ſelf-condemned*, and ſhall ſtrictly account for it to the *Lord* of Conſcience, whoſe law it dictates, and from which *no* humane laws can diſoblige you, *Tit.* 3. 11. *Rom.* 14. 12. *Acts* 4. 19, 20. You muſt not *ſin againſt God*, in *order* to *your ſafety*, or *his ſervice*, or to *ob-*

viate ſeparations, Rom. 3. 8. Job 13. 7. In ſuch a caſe the *ſin* of your being *ſeparated*, is not *yours* but *theirs* that ſeparate you. You are but *paſsive* herein that are thus precluded. You are *fugati* not *fugativi*, and the guilt will lye at the door of ſuch *Diotrephes*, 3 John 9, 10. Luke 11. 52. (2) If your *tranſactions* in the Communion of ſuch a worſhip be ſinful: That is, if you *actively concur* to, or *apparently countenance* thoſe ſinful modes and miniſtrations, which are *ſuch* in your apprehenſions or conſciences; This is not onely to *have fellowſhip with their ſin*, while you afford it *countenance* (who ſhould faithfully reprove and forward the reformation of the ſame in others as far as in you lyeth, *Eph.* 5. 11. *Rom.* 1. 32. *Lev.* 19. 17.) But to *offer* violence (as to *Gods command*, ſo) to *your own conſciences*, by your *voluntary compliance*, which is a ſin of a *ſcarlet* dy and tincture, *Rom.* 1. 32. *Jo* 9. 41.

Anſw. 3. As a mans *ſimple preſence* at an idolatrous or evil worſhip, (evil as reſpects the *ſubſtance* of it) doth not at all *include his Communion* in the others *ſin*, becauſe this alwayes *excludes his conjunction in*, or *countenance of* ſuch *ſervice*: So a mans *preſence* thereat, for *detecting* and *oppoſing* of ſuch falſe worſhip, and for *defence* of the *true* Worſhip, in oppoſition to that falſe, beſpeakes a *commendable Zeal* in all thoſe who are thereunto *regularly* called. Such was the *preſence* of holy *Paul*, at the *ſuperſtitious* Uſages of the *Athenians*. He hath not the *leaſt* fellowſhip with, or favour for thoſe evil and idolatrous ſervices. His buſineſs was not *conformity* to, but *confutation* of thoſe ignorant and unpreſcribed devotions, and to conduct them to the knowledge and ſervice of the true God, in his Son Jeſus, [*Acts* 17. 22, 23.] *Elijah* (it is true) was alſo *preſent* at the idolatrous fopperies of the *Prieſts of* Baal, and *perſwaded* in the *people* likewiſe. But how? Not with the leaſt *comprobation of*, or *countenance for* this idoll-ſervice, (which he utterly *confounded*) but for *confuting* the *Prieſts*, for *convincing* the *people*, and for *cleering* up the *purity* of Gods Worſhip, 1 *Kings* 18. 21. to 41.

Anſw.

Anſw. 4. *Such a preſence* of yours at an evil and idolatrous worſhip (evil with reſpect to the *ſubſtance* of it) which includes your *countenance of*, or *concurrence to any act* that is thus evil or idolatrous (eſpecially if it be thus in the judgement of your Conſciences) cannot be excuſed from being a *great ſin* againſt God. That a Conjunction in an evil *meanes* of worſhip, eſpecially *againſt Conſcience*, is an *eminent crime* in thoſe that are ingaged to the Confeſſion of Jeſus: Me thinks I ſhould not need to adde more in proof, conſidering what hath been already premiſed. But be ſure of this, that as the vitiating of the *Subſtantials* of worſhip, is a *far* greater ſin than is the vitiating of one or more *Circumſtantials*; So you greaten your ſin by a countenance of, and concurrence to an evil *means*, more than to an evil *mode* of worſhip. Oh! how *jealous* is our *holy God* of his *holy Worſhip!* that doth ſtrictly inhibit any action towards approbation or appearance of any falſe or evil means of worſhip, *Exodus* 34. 13, 14. 1 *Corinthians* 10. 20, 21, 22. You *countenance* a ſin *negatively*, when you do not (according to your place) diſcountenance it, when you do not what in you lies, regularly to reprove and reform it, 1 *Sam.* 3. 13. *Ezekiel* 33. 6. 8. 1 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2. *&c.* Doth your *company* give check hereto? What do you to *diſcourage* it? Will your *recourſe* thereto think you *reſtrain others*, or *rebuke it?* Let Conſcience ſpeak and be heard in it. You countenance a ſin *poſitively*, not onely when you *deviſe* or put it on; when you *defend* or plead for it; when you *delight* or have pleaſure in it: But when you *do that* which (in reaſon) ſubſerves to the *protecting* of it, or hath a *real open* appearance of compliance to it: Which is a countenance by *example*, and this is an *effectual* exhortation. Thus the Apoſtle condemns their communication in the meats offered to idols in the idols Temples; as that which not onely ſtumbled the infirm, but ſtrengthned the Idolaters, and had the ſemblance of an idolatrous compliance, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. 10. & 10. 20, *&c* And if Chriſtians might not *ſit at meat in the idols Temple*, much leſs might they be *ſeen there at their idolatrous tranſactions*, unleſs for reproof of ſuch idolatry.

Remember the Command in ſuch a Caſe: *You may not pollute your ſelves, or Gods holy name and ſervice. You muſt keep your ſelves pure, and not walk in the Statutes of your fathers, nor obſerve their judgements, nor defile your ſelves with their idols. You muſt not onely keep your ſelves from idols; but muſt flee from idolatry, and not ſo much as furniſh what may any way miniſter to it; but take good heed to your ſelves, leſt ye corrupt your ſelves, and that your hearts be not deceived.* And whether *this* be to *flee from idolatry* to *fall in* with an *idolatrous ſervice*; or to *take heed* of temptations thereunto, when you *throw* your ſelves upon them, and even *tempt* the *tempter?* Judge ye. 1 *Joh.* 5.21. 1 *Cor.* 10. 7. *Iſa.* 65 11. *Deut* 4. 15,16. & 11.16. *Ezek.* 18,19. to 39.

Before I conclude what concerns this Queſtion, give me leave to offer theſe four things to your Conſideration. 1. Though it ſhould be allowed you, that the *external modes* of *ſome* parts of Divine worſhip, are left free and undetermined of God (which yet cannot be ſaid of *all*, nor muſt be acknowledged as to *any*, in an *univerſal* latitude, God having limited us ſo far (at leaſt) that it be not *vain, ignorant, profane, irreverent*, Exod. 20. 7.) *Yet all* the *external means* of worſhip are plainly enough limited, and determined by the revealed will of God, who is the onely *object* and *original* of divine worſhip; So that neither *you*, nor *any* may *take from*, or *add unto* them, nor *turn aſide either to the right or left hand from them*, Deut 4.2. & 5.32,33 & 12. 32. Joſh 1.7. This is the *ſubſtance* of the Second Commandment. 2. The *Second* Commandment, which concerns *inſtituted* worſhip, is of *all* the Commandments *moſt ſtrongly fortified* againſt *humane inventions* and *innovations*, that they break not in upon it: and is *moſt ſeverely fenced by divine jealouſie and indignation*, which burns very hot againſt the breakers of it, *Exod.* 20. 4,5,6. and is not quenched but upon an holy reformation and regulation by it, *Ezek.* 16. 26, 27. *Deut.* 32. 18,19,20. *Hoſ.* 2.2,3,4. 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. 3. God expects your *ſtricteſt care* and *caution*, as concerns his *viſible worſhip*, that you *ſeek him, not after your own hearts, or your own eyes, by mingling your own ſinful imaginations*, and that you do not *ſerve him after*

after the Doctrines and Commandments of men, by making uſe of their *ſinful* inventions and traditions, *Numb* 15. 39. *Jer.* 3. 17. *Pſal.* 106. 39 *Col.* 2. 18. 20. to 23. Let me add 4. That he will not *endure your correſpondence with the ſin of others* in *corrupting* his worſhip, either by *walking in their courſes*, or *obeying their commands*, or *embracing their counſels* herein, or by any *undue connivance at*, or *toleration of* theſe Corruptions; againſt the *duties of your places and callings*, Mic 6 16. Hoſ. 5. 11. Dan 3. 18. Deut. 13. 6, 7, 8. Rev. 2. 14, 15, 20.

Queſt. *May we not be lawfully preſent at an evil and idolatrous Worſhip, without ſuch witneſsing againſt it, when the Civil Magiſtrate commands our religious attendance upon it?*

Anſw. First, Though Chriſtianity *bindes* us to the *beſt obedience unto the Civil Magiſtrates*, whether *ſupreme*, or *ſubordinate*, and that upon the *beſt* account, *for Conſcience ſake towards God*, and becauſe they bear the *impreſſion* of his *authority*, as well as of his *allowance*, and are *miniſters of his for our good*, Rom. 13. 1--8. 1 Pet. 2. 13. to 18 *Yet*, as they hold their Authority and Sovereignty *under him*, for *his glory* and *our good*; So the *active ſubjection* we owe to them is *in*, and *under him*, to whom they and we, are ſubordinated and ſubjected: *They* in *requiring* obedience from us, and *we* in *rendring* obedience to them: So that *their acts of Superiority* muſt not interfere either with *piety*, *juſtice*, or *charity*, and *our acts of ſubjection* muſt not impugn either *godlineſs* or *honeſty*, Pſa. 82. throughout, 1 Pet. 2 13 14. 2 Sam. 23. 3 1 Tim. 2. 2. Though God hath veſted the *Chriſtian* Magiſtrates, as he did the *Jewiſh*, with a care and charge *in*, and *about* his worſhip, that it be *duly* adminiſtred and attended, and that all abuſes in, and corruptions of it, may be either *prevented* or *reformed*; *Yet* may *they* not either *add to*, *abſtract from*, or *alter in any eſſential or integral part* of his Worſhip; but are as well *limited* by the Word of God herein, in point of *Government* on their part, as their Subjects are in point of *Obedience* on their part, and may no more *turn aſide*

from

from the Commandment, either to the right hand, or to the left, than may the meaneſt of their Vaſſals or Subjects, *Deuteron.* 17. 18, 19, 20.

Anſw. Second. As the Civil Magiſtrates then may not (without *great* ſin) *abuſe* their Authority committed to them of God, for corrupting his Worſhip, or commanding their Subjects to wait upon it, ſo (intrinſecally) corrupted; as being that which neither conſiſts with their *intruſtments* as Miniſters of God, or with their *engagements*, or the *ends* of Magiſtracy, for Gods glory and the peoples good, 1 *Kings* 16. 25, 26. 30. *&c.* 2 *Kings* 17. 21, 22. So the Civil Magiſtrates authority puts no obligation upon their ſubjects to obey theſe *ſinful commands*, or obſerve theſe *ſinful corruptions* of, or in the Worſhip of God. In that (1) *This act* of attendance hereupon is *ſinful* (as hath been proved) and *no Law* doth, or can induce an obligation to that which is *ſinful* and *unlawful*: Nor can it indeed be called a *Law* in ſuch a Caſe, unleſs *equivocally* and in *improper ſpeech*. (2) In that *their authority* being *ſubordinate*, is precluded in this, by a *ſuperior* authority of *God* himſelf. Gods command bindes us *from* this attendance, and therefore mans command cannot binde us to it: Gods command doth induce the *firſt* and *ſupreme* obligation; and cannot therefore be *ſuperſeded* by the command of man; which (at moſt) infers but a *ſecondary* and *ſubordinate* obligation. In ſhort: He that will ſay *mens law* binds him *to* that worſhip which *Gods law* binds him *from*, doth therein *ſubordinate* God to men, and at once blaſphemouſly *dethrones him*, and *deifies them*.

Anſw. Third. Hence, as the *Civil Magiſtrates* contract guilt to themſelves, by *commanding* an evil worſhip, ſo *their commands* thereof are too narrow a Covering for mens evil in *cloſing with*, or *conforming* to it. It will be no Apologie at Gods Barre; our Magiſtrates bid us to attend it; when we hereby break the *Law of God, who is higher than the higheſt*; to bend our ſelves to the *luſts of man whoſe breath is in his noſtrils*, and do provoke Heaven to pleaſe a worm on earth.

Iſrael ſinned a *great* ſin, in conforming to the idolatrous worſhip

ship of *Jeroboam*, and suffered therefore the greatest of sufferings, in being *removed out of Gods sight, because they willingly followed the Commandment*, Hosea 5. 11, 12. 2 Kings 17. 21, 22, 23. Let them instance not onely the *Samplar of the lives*, but the *Statute Lawes* of their Governors upon this Case, in the sixth chapter of *Micah*: Yet God is so far from accepting this Plea, that he aggravateth their provocation by it; In that *the Statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels, that I should make thee a desolation, &c.* Verse 15, 16. Doth the *supreme* Magistrate command those *Three Worthies*, Daniel 3. to the *worship* of the *Idol* which he had erected? They yet choose rather to *burn* than *bow*: And (commiting their concerns into the hands of God) with an *holy courage* and *humble confidence*, they stick not to tell him to the very face; *Be it known unto thee, O King, we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up*, Daniel 3. 11 to 25.

Again, as humane Laws will not warrant our *observance* of a *false* worship; So nor our *omission* of the *true* Worship which God hath instituted. For then *mans* Law may loosen us from *Gods*, and the *inferior* power disoblige us from the *Superior*. Is *Daniel* precluded prayer to God by a *politick* Statute? He will not obey that Law, nor omit his work, but *opens his window toward Hierusalem*, though the Den of Lyons be the issue of his devotions to the Lord, *Dan.* 6 10, &c. Are *Peter, John*, and the other *Apostles* prohibited preaching? They dare not break the command of God *for preaching*, by obeying the command of man in *forbearing to preach* and press it home upon the consciences of their adversaries; *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye*, Acts 4. 19. & 5. 29.

Quest. *What if our hearts mean time abide with God, and adhere firmly to his true worship, may we not then bodily attend such an evil and idolatrous worship?*

Answ. (1) This is *a rotten covert*. As if the *Soul* could be wholly distant from, while your *Bodies* are delivered up unto such an evil

evil and idolatrous worſhip. Hath not your *underſtanding* the *direction* of, and your *will* the *dominion* in, and over all bodily actions? If theſe had not pre-aſſented and conſented, how came you thither? You *came* thither, you were not *carried* thither. (2) 'Tis *againſt a ruled Caſe.* The Apoſtle argues the Caſe with his Corinthians; *whether they might ſit at meat in the idols temple*, and there eat of the meats offered to the idols, their *hearts* abiding firm with God, and they not applying themſelves to the *worſhip* of thoſe idols. The Apoſtle reſolves it in the *negative.* And 1. he *chides them for it*, as an act inconſiſtent either with *charity to ſouls*, whom they did hereby imbolden to ſin, 1 *Cor.* 8. 10. or with *communion with our Savior*, whom they did hereby incenſe to jealouſie, 1 *Cor.* 10. 20, 21, 22. 2. He *calls them from it* by many cogent and preſſing Arguments, 2 *Corin.* 6. 14. *ad finem.* 3. This is *a robbing of Chriſt.* While you reſerve onely your ſouls for our Savior, and render over your bodies to an idol-ſervice. Whereas your *bodies* as well as your *ſouls* are *his*, both by *right* of purchaſe on his part, and by a proper act of ſelf-reſignation on your part, if you are *indeed Chriſtians*, 1 Cor. 6 19, 20. Rom. 12. 1.

If you plead *Naamans* example, 2 *Kings* 5 18. you muſt put into the conſideration therewith, that the words will as well bear *another tranſlation*, which refers to the *time paſt*, and they are ſo rendred in other Scriptures, as is inſtanced by our *Engliſh Annotators.* Thus: *In this thing the Lord pardon thy ſervant, that when my Maſter went* [Pſal. 51 & 52. & 54. in the title] *into the houſe of Rimman to worſhip there, and he leaned* [2 Sam 1. 6.] *on my hand, and I bowed down or worſhipped* [Exod 33 10.] *in the houſe of Rimmon, when I bowed down or worſhipped in the houſe of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy ſervant in this thing.* If we *thus* render the words, they afford not the *leaſt* pretence *for* this practice; but an *argument* (rather) is prompted *againſt* it: *Naaman* imploring pardon for his *paſt* idolatry, if you follow the preſent Tranſlation. Yet 1. it cannot be conceived, that he did *fully* and *deliberately* intend a compliance to, or conjunction in this idol-ſervice; he having in the words immediately preceding, *aſſured the Prophet, that he*

he would henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor ſacrifice unto other Gods, but unto the LORD, ver. 17. Beſides in the words immediately ſubjoyned, he hath this happy diſmiſſion from the Prophet, *Go in peace*, ver. 19. who cannot be interpreted to ſeal ſuch a foul intention, with ſo fair a valediction. I know ſome (who adhere to this Tranſlation of the words) apprehend, that the words import no more than the intending of *homage* and *obſervance to his Maſter*, not to the *Idol*; But this I forbear, and ſhall further adde no more but this: 2. That if in compliance to this Tranſlation, his words ſhould be extended to a concluſive purpoſe and reſolution of being preſent at the adoration of this idol, yet you cannot *vindicate* it (being thus underſtood) from being a *very great ſin*. For you may obſerve he *begs pardon* for it at leaſt *twice* in this one verſe. And he that fears *ſin* as the *greateſt evil* (becauſe moſt oppoſite to *God* his *greateſt good*) will not dare upon hopes or enſurance of pardon, to incur ſin, or indulge it protection: but doth (with the *bleſſed Apoſtle*) *reject* ſuch an inference with *abhorrence*, and *refute* it likewiſe by *arguments*, Romans 6. 1, 2, &c.

Queſt. *May we lawfully uſe the proper badges and peculiar characters of ſuch as are of an adverſe profeſſion, (adverſe to the true Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt) when we may thereby preſerve our civil liberty, and ſecure our perſons?*

Though you may uſe a *civil* Badge or Cognizance of ſuch profeſſors, as alſo that which is *ſacred*, that is *common* to *them*, and to the *Orthodox*; and though I could gladly in this perſwade you *to ſuſpend* your *Chriſtian liberty* when it may *ſubſerve charity*, and *to become all things of this nature, to all men*, whereby you may *ſerve* the *goſpel*, and *ſave* them, (as *Paul* hath done, 1 *Cor.* 9. 19. to 24.) yet under *pretence* of ſecuring your perſons, or ſerving others profit, you may not *ſcandalize* your holy profeſſion, by *ſymbolizing* with, or *conformity* to that *peculiar ſervice*. Thoſe *proper* ceremonies, or *ſorts* of *ſpiritual veſtments*, which do *character*

forth to, or bespeak before others, that profession (and none but that) which is *alien* from, and *adverse* to the *pure* faith & worship of our Lord Jesus. This were indeed little less than to *abandon* the sound, and hypocritically to *assume a sinful profession* to us. Will you see,

(1) How it is *reprehended* by *Paul* in those *Judaizing* teachers and temporizers, who in compliance to the *Jews*, constrain'd *Christians* to be *circumcised*: *only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ*: when Circumcision had now received an honorable burial in the Churches of Christ among the *Gentiles*, and was retained by the *Jews* in *opposition* to the *cross of Jesus*, Gal. 6. 12, 14. *Peter* also is for this *withstood by him to the very face* at *Antioch, because he was to be blamed, for before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles of* the meats prohibited by the law of *Moses*; *But when they were come, he withdrew, fearing them which were of the Circumcision*. *Paul* therefore argues him of *dissimulation* (which is *twice* mentioned) in that he endeavored to secure his liberty with a semblance of conformity; And did therein not only *scandalize* the *Gentiles*, but *symbolize* with the *Jews*, who upheld this *discrimination* of meats, and that as *distinctive* from the *Gentiles*. And *Paul* plainly professeth *that he walked not uprightly herein, according to the simplicity of the Gospel*, Gal. 2. 11, to 15. (2) How is it restrained? The Lord chargeth his people that they should *not* herein, *do like the heathens that were round about them*; that they should *not round the corners of their heads, they shall not cut themselves, nor make any baldness between their eyes for the dead, nor print any marks upon them; for ye are the children of the Lord your God, an holy, a peculiar people to himself*, 2 Kings 17. 15. Lev. 19. 27, 28. Deut. 14 1 2. The *reason* of these prohibitions is doubtless *extensive* to *us*, as *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*, Rom. 15. 4. You may not then use *proper Popish idolatrous Ceremonies or sorts of Vestments*, to preserve your safety among *them*, more than you may use proper *Paganish* and idolatrous Ceremonies or sorts of Vestments, to preserve your safety among *these*. And might

might Saints have taken ſhelter, by the uſe of ſuch, without ſin: they need not have *wandred about*, as they did, *in ſheep-skins and goat-skins*, Heb. 11. 37. Surely, if a *woman* may not wear that which pertaineth to a *man*, as neither may a *man put on a womans garment*; *but all that do ſo, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God*, Deut 22.5. Then much leſs may there be an allowance of ſuch metamorphoſing habits in *Religion*, with *acceptation* to the Lord our God. If the open diſcrimination of the *Two ſexes* in the ſame *kinde* may not be deſtroyed by *that*; then neither may the open differencing of a *flagitious ſect*, from the *faithful in Chriſt*, be deſtroyed by *this*. (3) What is the reſult? You are *ſecured* by theſe ſubterfuges: but 'tis in, and by *ſin*, and with *ſnares*, if not upon your *corporals*, yet (which is worſe) upon your *conſciences*. *You* are ſecured; but *ſinners* are hardned. The *Jewiſh compliances* to their idolatrous neighbors, did but heighten their obduratenes and oppoſition to the true faith and worſhip, 2 *Kings* 17. 8 &c. *You* are *ſecured*, but others are *ſeduced*. *Barnabas* himſelf (as well as the other believers) *was led away with Peters diſſimulation*, Gal 2 13. *You* are *ſecured*, but who *ſuffers*? God ſuffers in his honor; the Goſpel ſuffers in its ordinances; the *godly* ſuffer in their names and ſpirits: And whether this be a ſecurity for ſuch to ſeek after, as ſet *God* before them as their *reward*, and his *Goſpel* as their *rule*, and *godlineſs* as the *matter* of their *rejoycing*? Let Conſcience ſpeak faithfully.

Queſt. *May we not lawfully accept of, and uſe anothers Certificate, that we have renounced our holy profeſſion in this or that particular, which is the butt of perſecution; when we may thereby ſecure our perſons, and do ſtill retain the ſame principles?*

Though *ſelf-ſafety* is, and ſhould be dear to every man, & may, yea muſt be endeavored *ſubordinately*, *yet* not by *ſinful means*, or with *ſcandal* and *ignominy* to *our Maſter*. In this *Caſe* it muſt be *ſacrificed* to him, or we are not *ſaved*, but *loſe our ſelves*, Mat. 10. 38, 39. c. 12-25. and by *accepting deliverance* on *ſinful terms* and

Testimonials, we do but accelerate destruction to our selves, and dishonor to him. This was the sin of the *Libellatici* in the primitive times, who were *censured* for it by the *Church*. That they accepted by themselves or others for self-safety, such *Certificates* and Letters testimonial of adoring the idols, while they did not *adore*, but *abhorred* them. Will you consider?

(1) How *distant* this is from the Commands of Christ. Let Conscience judge impartially. Is this to *contend earnestly for the Faith, once delivered to the Saints*, by seeking coverts from this *duty*, or (at least) from the *danger* hereby, under anothers sinful testimony? Is this to be *valiant for the truth upon the earth? to call for justice, and to plead for truth?* Jude 3 Jer. 9 3 Is. 59. 4. Is this to *shine as lights in the world?* or to sit down in darkness? *to hold forth the word of life?* or to hold it back for fear of death or torments? Is it to *put your Candle on a Candlestick?* or is it not to *put it out* rather? or at least to *put it under a bushel?* Mat. 5. 15, 16. Phil. 2. 15, 16.

(2) This were *deceit* and *collusion* with men, not *confession to* men: And cannot be excused from an *high* degree of dissimulation with man, of deserting your Mediator, of base cowardise in you, and of betraying his cause with others. And *cursed be the deceiver*, saith the Lord. *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*, Mal. 1 14 Jer. 48. 10.

(3) This were a *daring communion* in the others *sin*, while you *take pleasure in* it, at least *use the patronage of* it, and take *protection*, from and by his false and lying testimonials, which are such to your own knowledge, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. *Rom.* 1 32. Besides, what desperate *cruelty* is it to the others soul? who should be *ashamed* through your confessed piety, and not *hardned* in his prejudices against godliness, and in persecution of the godly, through your carnal policy, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15, 16.

(4) This will be a *dart* thorow your own *consciences*: who *condemn* that sin in another, which you make your own *covert*, and therefore are the *more inexcusable*, Rom. 2, 1, 2, 3 with 1. 32. Are you *sincere* in what you say, that you still retain the same principles?

princ ples? Will not theſe ever and anon be as a fireband in thy Conſcience, and flaſh hell in thy face? Throw away theſe ſinful v'zours then, and take to thee the ſhield of faith. Sound faith will *endure the tortures, not accepting deliverance*, when it is *offered*, with *diſhonor* to *Chriſt*, or cannot be *obtained*, but with *diſhoneſty* by the *Chriſtian*, or with the *defilement* of his *conſcience*, Hebr. 11. 35.

Prop. 3. There is *no time*, wherein we may *do* any thing, *contrary* to what we ſhould at *any time confeſs* to be our *duty*, (in a matter of faith or worſhip) to or concerning Chriſt. The *negative* confeſſion ſpoken of, (as it notes a *non compliance* in profeſſion, or practice, to the pravities of men, or times,) muſt *ever* be preſerved; whatever be the perſecution imminent, or inflicted. For this ye have 1. His command to ingage you, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *Heb.* 3. 13. *Pſal.* 37. 27. *Prov.* 3. 7 to 21. 2. His choice grace to enable you, if you are not onely *almoſt*, but *altogether Chriſtians*, Jer. 32. 40. Pſal. 80. 17, 18. Hebr. 12. 28. 3. A cloud of witneſſes to encourage you, *Heb.* 12. 1, 2. And 4. The contrary were (in effect) to *deny* Chriſt, and that to no mean degree, *Jude* 4. This may not be done then,

(1) Though the *defection* ſhould be never ſo *general*: though *truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himſelf a prey, or is accounted mad, as in* Iſaiah's time, Iſaiah 59. 15. though we ſhould be *left alone*, in our own apprehenſions, as *Elijah* was, 1 *Kings* 19. 10. 10 14. or have the *whole world* againſt *one Athanaſius*: Yet *one Elijah, one Athanaſius* muſt be againſt *all* the prieſts of *Baal*, againſt the *whole* world of heretical and ungodly men. We muſt maintain our holy profeſſion, with thoſe holy perſons. Our *rule* is; *We muſt not follow a multitude to do evil; We muſt not be conformed to this world; We muſt not run unto the ſame exceſs of riot*, how *ſtrange* ſoever it be reputed: but keep our *uprightneſs* of profeſſion in the middeſt of a *crooked* and perverſe nation, *Exod.* 23. 2. *Rom.* 12. 2. 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. *Phil.* 2. 15, 16.

(2) Though the *danger* ſhould be never ſo *great*. We muſt

hold

hold fast our profession without wavering, and may not *cast away our confidence*, what soever it cost us, *Heb.* 10. 23 *ad finem.* We may not *choose iniquity rather than affliction*: But must rather endure the *furnace*, and embrace the *flames* than desert the *faith*, *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in this Egypt*, Job 36. 21. Dan. 3 17. 18. Hebr. 11. 25, 26.

Prop. 4. There is no time, wherein a *positive* confession of Christ, as it is *dispositively* taken (for an inward disposition to confess) is not *due* from us. So it is clearly enough stated by *Peter*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.* Though you are not bound to *render* an account alwayes, yet you are bound to be *ready* always, at least with an *habitual* readiness, and this in *act* also *within*, and to be *reduced into act without*, as often as you are *required* to give an answer, when it doth accord with the *glory* of your Master. It is true, that the confession of Christ is an *affirmative* command, and so bindes not *ad semper*. But though the *outward action* be not required at at all times, yet the *inward habitude* is. As it obtaineth in prayer, and such other affirmative precepts, so in this also Though the external *duty* cannot be at all times done, yet the internal *disposition* is at all times *due*. We may never be out of a praying or confessing *frame*, though we cannot be ever found in the acts of prayer, or of confession.

Prop. 5 There are *some* times wherein a *positive* confession of Christ, as it is *declaratively* taken, or noteth the outward *declaration*, is *not due* from us. This is (as hath been said) an *affirmative* precept, and so *always* binds us, yet not *to always*, *i. e.* 'tis *always our duty*, but is not *always to be done*. 1. We are not always to exhibit an *oral* confession. There could then be *no* time for our sleep, or for other speech, *&c* which *nature* asks for, and *grace* alloweth. 2. Nor are we always to exhibit a *real* confession. For so there could be no allowance for other natural actions, or for ordering our civil affairs and concernments; which as our *natures and necessities call for from* us; so *God* hath *commanded to* us.

Quest.

Quest. *At what times are we priviledged from such a positive confession of Christ?*

Answ 1. When the *ingagements* for *self-safety* are not *preponderated* by, or in an *equal peiz with* those for our *Saviors glory*. We serve a *most indulgent Master*, who hath not onely promised an eternal glory, but provided also for our temporal safety. He hath *subordinated* indeed *this* to *that*, and *both to himself*. But when our *open* confession of him cannot *serve* him, but the *occultness* of our conversation may therewith *secure* us, he alloweth us the benefit of our un-observed recesses, as he did in like cases to *Moses* and others, and will *now have mercy, and not sacrifice*, Exod. 2. 15, *&c.* 1 Kings 18 13 Mat. 12. 7, 9, 13.

Answ. 2. When the *interest* both of the *Confession* and *Confessour* will be visibly *prejudiced*. In this Case not onely *our own good*, but *Gods glory* do preclude it, and priviledge us This seemeth to have been the truth of *Davids* case, when he stayed with *Achish*, 1 Sam 21. 11. &c. Our *Saviors Rule* for regulating his Saints, in giving holy admonitions and rebukes (in *Mat* 7. 6) restrains us from *casting away* our holy counsels and confessions upon *such* as will but *trample on them, and tear us*. Are we then demanded to deliver forth an account of our faith and hope in Christ by some *private* person or persons, who will therefore *(visibly)* but rent and persecute *us*, and reproach and prejudice *it*? We are not *(in this case)* onely *indempnified* for our present silence before such, or for putting by these demands with other discourses, but *enjoyned* it, *Prov.* 26. 4, 5. & 7, 8.

Answ. 3. When the *ends* of confessing Christ cannot manifestly be promoted by it, or attained by us. For all *means* are in order to the *end* for which they are ordained; and our *obligation* to the means is for *obtaining* of the end. The end indeed is desirable, and to be intended *for it self*, but the election and use of means is *not for themselves*, but *for the sake of the end* to which they are referred. What these ends are, is afore said. In *these* cases then, we are priviledged from an open, oral confession of Christ.

(t) If

(1) If the *glory of God our Savior will be visibly rather hindred then helped by it.* All the *lines* of *subordinate ends* and *means*, must *center* in *this*, which is the *supream end* of man. If the juncture of circumstances be such, as this means will *now* rather *cross* than *conduce* to this end, we are then exempted. Thus *Esther* conceals both her *relations* and *religion* in her recess at *Shushan the pallace*, according to the *charge of Mordecai*; while her confession would *manifestly* obstruct her honorable preferment to the kings bosom, and her hopes thereupon of promoting the blessed interest of the *King of kings*: But when a door is once open (after her espousal to him) of glorifying God in retrieving the bloody decree of *Haman*, and rescuing his people out of this destroying hand, she *openly* avoucheth both her *people* and *profession*, Esth. 2. 0 7. 3, 4.

(2) *If the Gospel of Grace will be visibly rather harmed than advanced* by this open confession of Christ, the present *circumstances* of time considered. For we may *do nothing* in *direct prejudice* of the *Gospel*, 2 Cor. 13. 8. Thus our Savior did often *prohibit* the publication of his miraculous and signal Cures unto his *Patience*, especially in the *first entrance* of his *Ministery*, lest it might not only be interpreted a study of popularity in him, but *intercept* the surer passage of the Gospel among his, as it sometimes did, upon their immature and imprudent promulgation of them, *Mark* 1. 44. 45. & 7. 36. *Matth.* 8 4. & 9. 30.

(3) *If the good of souls* (in the glory of himself) *will be visibly rather hazarded than attained by it. When & with whom private* endeavors will best promote these *ends*, we may and must be *private* Our precious Lord hath commended *privacies* of this kind, by his own unquestioned example, *Luk* 9 10, 11. & 10 23. As hath *Paul* also by his; who tells his Galatians, *I communicated the Gospel privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain*, Gal. 2 2. And chargeth us to keep our perswasions in *indifferencies private*, when, and as often as our brethren will be *stumbled or offended, or made weak* by our *unreasonable* practices or profession, in such matters *adiaphorous. Hast thou faith? have it to thy self before God*, Rom. 14. 21, 22.

Prop.

Propoſ. 6. If you would know whether at this, or that *particular* time, ſuch an *open* and *obſerved* Confeſſion of Chriſt is *due* from you; you muſt conſider the *ends* of this Confeſſion, and whether it will now *conduce* or not unto, and *promote* theſe ends. For *means* receive their *value* from their *end*. *All means are for their end*, and the end is not *attained* but by the means *Nature* it ſelf doth plainly dictate your obligation to the uſe of meanes, when, wherein, and as often as you may thereby *lawfully* obtain the end. Would you then know whether you are *now called*, according to your *ſeveral* capacities, to ſuch a *ſolemn* Confeſſion of Chriſt: You have theſe ſerious Queſtions to ask of, and anſwer in your own conſciences.

(1) *Will God be moſt magnified by my preſent open confeſſion in the preſent circumſtances I am in?* Speak Conſciences and ſpare not, whether of *publick Officers* in *Church* or *Commonwealth*, or of thoſe that are in a more *private orb*. This is the *higheſt* & *ultimate end*, and therefore infers the higheſt and indiſpenſable ingagements to the uſe of all appointed means; and then *eſpecially*, and moſt *eminently*, when the attainment of this end by them, is obvious to your own ſenſe and conſcience. Is not *this* your *end*? Or is not *confeſſion of Chriſt* a *means* of divine impreſſion, in order to it? Doth not Conſcience dictate the *preſent* uſefulneſs of this means, in order to that end? *Now*, if ever then, *Let every tongue confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of the Father*, Phil 2. 11. Rom. 14 11. *Who* may due to be mute when the Lord is to be magnified, eſpecially of ſuch as call him *Maſter*? Whoſe *confeſſion* ſhould not be *manifeſt* when *Chriſt* ſhall be thereby *magnified*, though it ſhould coſt life it ſelf, eſpecially if you are Chriſts *Miniſters*, Pſ. 35. 27, 28. Mal 1 6. Phil 1 20. *Nay, let all ſuch as love thy ſalvation ſay continually, the Lord be magnified*, Pſal. 40. 16. & 70. 4.

(2) *Will the Goſpel be beſt maintained by my preſent publick confeſſion, in the preſent circumſtances I am in?* Let Conſcience be plainly heard out by *all Magiſtrates*, by all *Miniſters* and *members* of Chriſt, who lay claim to the everlaſting Goſpel. Oh! the *great goodneſs* that the *Goſpel* hath declared and done to & for you: what

have *you* declared or done, or yet will declare or do for the *Goſpel?* What ſhould not be done, or ſuffered for the *Goſpels* ſake, that it be *not hindred?* much more that it may be *encreaſed*, Gal. 2. 5. 1 *Cor.* 9. 12, 13 2 *Cor.* 10. 15. Muſt we not *all pray* that *the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified?* then ſurely we muſt (according to our place and calling) do our beſt and moſt to *promote* it, and may not be *aſhamed* to confeſs and plead for it, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 1. *Rom.* 1. 16. *Yea*, rather then part with it, or not profeſs the Goſpel, when you may thereby promote it; *You muſt be partakers of the afflictions of the Goſpel, according to the power of God, and not be aſhamed of the teſtimony of the Lord, nor of ſuch as are his priſoners*, 2 Tim. 1. 8.

(3) *Will the good of ſouls be beſt miniſtred unto by my preſent Confeſſion in the preſent circumſtances I am in?* Let the *witneſs* of Conſcience be attended, eſpecially by you that watch for, or have the charge of ſouls, and inſpect on of Conſciences. *No man ſhould ſeek his own onely, but every one anothers welfare.* May ye not *hide* your ſelves in whatſoever concerns your neighbors *eſtates* but *help* them even to their *ſtraying brutes?* 1 *Cor.* 10. 24. Deut. 22. 1. to 6. Exod. 23. 4, 5. Much leſs may you hide your ſelves in what concerns their *ſouls*, the *beſt* part, and of abiding perfection: but ſhould ſtudy (to your utmoſt) to promote their eternal ſalvation, *Jude* ver. 23. *Rom.* 11. 14. Ah Sirs! who ſhould be ſilent when *ſouls* lye at ſtake? and he may *both ſave himſelf, and them that hear him, by the ſame act?* 1 Cor 9. 22. Rom. 10. 1. 1 Tim. 4. 16. Is your preſent Confeſſion likely to *bring in ſouls to Chriſt?* Oh *happy* work both to us and him! and an high piece of wiſdom, that you *forthwith* ſet about it, and fall in with the *preſent ſeaſon*, Iſa. 5. 20. Dan. 12, 3. Prov. 11. 30. Is your preſent Confeſſion like to *build up ſouls in Chriſt?* Oh! do not baulk it, but *bring you forth out of the good treaſure of good hearts, your good things.* Wherefore have you your faculty of *ſpeech*, or the furniture of the *ſpirit*, but *for good to the uſe of edifying?* And if you ſhould *ſeek, that you may excel to the edifying of the Church*, then no doubt you may not overſlip ſuch

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an *eminent ſeaſon*, Eph. 4. 29. 1 Cor. 12. 7. & 14. 12. Rom. 15. 2.

Prop. 7. If you would know to what *ſort* or *kinde*, as alſo to what *ciſe* or *degree* of poſitive Confeſſion you are at this, or that *particular* time ingaged; you muſt conſider theſe *ends*, and what *ſort* or *ciſe* of Confeſſion will beſt *conduce to*, and *promote* theſe *ends*. For the *end directs* and *determines*, orders and over-rules in the *choice* and *uſe* of *means*. The end both *leads* and *limits* us (according to the *circumſtances* we are in) both *what means* we ſhould uſe, and to *what meaſure*: As the prudent deliberation of *health* and *life* points us, like the finger of a Dyal, whether we ſhould in this juncture uſe *food* or *phyſick*; and not onely *what* we ſhould take in ſuch a caſe, but *how much* alſo. Here let me leave you with theſe two Concluſions: That 1. by whatever order or kinde of Confeſſion. And 2 by whatever obſervedneſs or degree of Confeſſion, you may beſt come to, and keep up theſe ends, you are bound to uſe that order and obſervedneſs.

Concluſ. 1. *By what ever order or ſort of Confeſſion you may beſt ſerve and ſecure theſe ends, you are obliged to that ſort and order of confeſſion.* 1. *Reaſon* inſtructs you to make choice and uſe of the *beſt* means, whereby you may compaſs your juſt ends and intentions. It doth not onely *inhibit the uſe of what is contrary* to them, but doth *enjoyn* the uſe of ſuch meanes as are moſt *convenient* to attain them. 2. *Religion* engages you to uſe all *meanes* of Gods appointment for the *ends* by him appointed, and the *beſt* of every kinde, and *moſt apt* for the obtaining of them, and for the honoring of him. He requireth the *male* in your *flock*, the *beſt means* you can make uſe of, and without any *bile*, or *blemiſh*. He will not be put off with the *maimed, and halt, and torn for ſacrifice*. Who ever reſerves the *beſt* from him, he counts him a *deceiver*, and *curſeth* him, and it as *deceit* and *falſhood*. Mal. 1. 8. 13, 14. Hoſ 11. 12. Will the glory of God then, in the goſpel of his Son, and good of ſouls, be beſt furthered, according to your preſent circumſtances, by a formal and orall, or by a virtual and real confeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, or by them both together *accordingly*, muſt you comport your ſelves.

Fifth, *Will a formal and vocal confession of Christ best serve these ends, as you are now circumstanced?* The premiſes do plainly prove that this *kind* of Confeſſion is *now* your duty, and you may not be diverted from it. (1) Happily theſe ends will be moſt advanced, and beſt attained by an *open and plain declaration of, and for him.* If ſo, you may not decline it, but muſt readily give out your atteſtation to him, and anſwer to others of the *faith and hope* that is in you, and of your *obedience* unto him; and muſt *declare the works of God, and his glory among the heathen,* (if the preſent exigencies require it) as well as *among his people,* 1 Pet. 3. 15. Pſal 78.5,6,7. & 96.3. & 64.9. (2) Happily theſe ends will be beſt enſured by an open and publick *Diſputation.* If ſo, you may not dally in it, but muſt *contend earneſtly* (according to your *capacity*) *for the faith once delivered,* Jude ver. 3.

Queſt. *Is every Confeſſor bound to diſpute for Chriſt and his concerments?*

Though *impaſſionate Diſputes for,* and *Defences of* the Goſpel, faith and Worſhip, which have been undertaken in *his ſufficiency,* and humbly and uprightly mannaged in *his skill and ſtrength,* and *for his ſake,* hath been always of great advantage to the *Cauſe of Jeſus,* and to the confounding of the enemies, *Acts* 9. 22 and 19. 8, 9, 10. & 17. 2, 3, 4, 17. to 34. And though every man is concerned to declare a *reaſon of the hope that is in him,* yet every man is not qualified to diſcuſs the ſame, in a ſtrict way of *ratiocination* and *diſpute* againſt all Opponents. The *Diſputants* we read of upon ſuch ſubjects in the ſacred Scriptures, have been men *eminently* inſtructed of God, and inveſted with gifts, of much skill, and *mighty in the Scriptures;* as, *Apollos, Stephen, Paul,* and *Barnabas,* Acts 18. 24 *ad finem.* & 6. 8, 9, 10 & 15. 2. & 9. 8, 9. 'Tis true, every man ſhould *covet earneſtly the beſt gifts, and that he may excel to the edifying of the Church,* but that every man is concern'd to ingage in diſputations and *ſcholaſtical* ventilations, with the ſubtile enemies of our Faith, will not thence be *inferred,* eſpecially

cially in that it is made such a discriminating character (not of a *member* of Christ, but) of a *Minister* of Christ; *that he be able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers*, 1 Cor. 12. 31 & 14. 1, 2. Tit. 1. 9.

When the holy *ends* afore-mentioned will be rather *prevented* and *prejudiced*, than *promoted* by such open engagements and conflicts on your part, you may not (though provoked thereunto) *accept* the Challenges of the Adversary, but should either put by his arrogance with some pious diversion, or pray in the assistance of others who can better defend the Truth, and defeat them. Let not *passion* couzen, or *pride* corrupt you, to mistake your *call* herein. You are never called of God to dispute for his Gospel with *such*, or when the *Truth* will visibly *lose*, and *error* visibly gain, through your disability and disproportion to the Contest. If the *weak* in *the faith may not be received to doubtful Disputations* among the *Saints* in Christ, much less are they required to enter the Lists of Disputation with the subtile and cunning *Sophisters* of a corrupted Age: God *requiring from* them but as he *giveth to* them, and as they may glorifie him, *Rom.* 14. 1. *Math.* 25. 22, 23, 29. In a word, *you should do nothing against the truth*, that may (through your inordinacy or infirmity) either wound or weaken it: But *all for the Truth*, to promote the esteem, and preserve the entireness of it, 2 *Corinthians* 13. 8.

I advise every one in this Case, to *observe* the *Adversary* that opposeth, and *his own ability* and order or capacity: And how these ends will be attained, or hazarded thereby And *as every one hath received the gift*, and may reach these ends by, or upon the Antagonist with whom he hath to conflict; *so let him minister, not stretching himself beyond the line of his* abilities, or the *measure* to which he hath arrived, that the *Name* of Christ may not suffer through your weakness in the *Congress*, and his Cause and Church sustain shame through your being *conquered*, and through their boasts and cracks who will *triumph* over the Truth, through your fall and ignorance. Doth the *Antagonist* outmatch

outmatch you in abilities? and happily glorieth over you, in that you decline the Conteſt? Be it ſo. A plain and pious aſſerting of the important truths of Jeſus; and of the evidence and influence hereof as to your Conſciences; together with a plain and particular acknowledgement of your inability to ſo uneven a conflict, will both beſpeak *your humility* and the *Goſpels honor*. If you could ſay no more but with that happy Martyr, *Though I cannot diſpute for the truth, yet I can and will dye for the truth*: yet this will be a ſeed of *comfort* to you, and of *conviction* to them

II. Secondly, *Will a virtual confeſſion beſt ſerve theſe ends, in the circumſtances you are in?* You may not fail as to it, or as to the way (whether *active* or *paſsive*) whereby theſe *ends* will be accompliſhed.

1. Will the expliciteneſs of your profeſſion in an *active* way beſt promote theſe ends? Let it put you upon *preſent action*, that you may celebrate this holy Confeſſion, both by the openneſs of your *own practice*, and by *owning* other *profeſſors*.

Queſt. *Whether, and how far Confeſſors are bound to be open in the practice of Chriſtianity, eſpecially in times of perſecution?*

Though we may not *un-neceſſarily* draw our *ſecret* duties of Piety, or deeds of Charity into publique ſight and obſervance, which would be *alien* from the ſpecial nature of *ſuch* duties, and *adverſe* to our Saviors directions, and an *ambiating* of applauſe with men, and therefore of no *acceptance* with, or recompence from God, *Math.* 6. 1. to 7. And though no part of our Chriſtian practice be deſigned, *finally*, for *approbation with men*, or *to be ſeen of them*, which were *groſs hypocriſie*, and is ſo far from finding commendation with God, that it is certainly followed with his curſe, and many complicated woes, *Matth.* 23. 5, 27, 28. 2 *Cor.* 10. 18. *Yet*, as God is exalted, the godly edified, the Goſpel enlarged, and the ungodly are either expoſed to ſhame, or egregiouſly ſilenced, or effectually won over from ſin, by the evi-

dence

dence of our good works, *Gal.* 1. 23, 24. *Eph.* 4. 16, 29. 1 *Pet.* 3. 1, 16. So, 'tis not onely *lawful* that we may, but *laudable* and *needful* that we ſhould have our Converſation ſo conſpicuous amongſt *men*, that they may *by our good works which they ſhall behold, glorifie God in the day of viſitation.* And ſo *is the will of God, that with well doing ye put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*, 1 Pet. 2. 12, 15.

'Tis true, you muſt not *inordinately* affect the ſight or cenſures of any man, or men. But if you *ſubordinate* your actions and appearances before men, to the *ſight* and approbation of *God*, and do *therefore* perform your Chriſtian obedience before them, that they may thereby be perſwaded to convert to, and honor him; you do but therein anſwer his ends, and your own engagements; And ſhould not feed your fears of being hypocrites, or forbear this expliciteneſs, when you make your *own glory* to ſerve *his*; and are ſo *far from ſeeking the praiſe of men, more than the praiſe of God*, that you *firſt* ſeek this, and ſhoot at it as your *mark*, and ſeek that *onely* for this its ſake; and uſe it onely as your *butt*, that you may the better hit this *mark*. Hear therefore your duty and our Saviors direction. *Let your light* not onely be, but *ſhine*, and that *before men*, and ſo ſhine before them, *that they may ſee your good works and glorifie your Father which is in heaven*, Mat. 5. 16. Nor ſhould times of perſecution take you off from this *publickneſs*: but cauſe you to mend your pace, and to ſpread your ſayls to every wind that will blow you the ſwifter and ſurer into this happy Port. The *Saints ſcattered* through the ſtorms of perſecution, *muſt* yet *ſhew out of a good converſation their works with meekneſs of wiſdom.* The *Philippians*, notwithſtanding the *night* of perſecution, muſt and *do ſhine as lights in the world in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation*, Iſa. 3. 13. Phil. 2. 15. with 1. 28, 29, 30. *Daniel* (in this caſe) ſticks not to make up his *private* Chriſtian *Offices* of *publick* and common *obſervance, opening his windows*, as well as not omitting his work, that others might take Copy and Courage from his Conſtancy in his family, to follow after God *fully*, and not forego their *duty to* God, upon feares

Or

of violating the *Decrees* of men, *Dan.* 6. 10. The *Apostles* also do not, will not quit their *preaching* of the sincere *Word*, or *performance* of the spiritual and solemn *Worship*, to the *best degree of publickness* they might, how sharp soever the winds of Adversity and Affliction blow upon them, or they be scurrilously treated, *as pestilent and seditious fellows for it*, Acts 4. 18, 9. & 5. 42. & 24. 5, 14.

The *degree* of *explicitenes* in our Christian practice, which becomes our *duty* in case of persecution, will best be *directed* by attending the ends mentioned, and the attainment thereof by such explicitenes. See Conclusion second.

Quest. *Whether, and how far are we bound to own the Confessours of Christ publiquely, especially in case of persecution?*

Though you are not bound to *own* such in any *sinful*, or *unlawful matter*, who therein do not *own* but *oppose* your *Master*; as neither by any sinful or unlawful *meanes*, for *his good* doth not *want*, nor will *warrant your evil*; as neither by stepping or moving out of, or beyond the bounds and limits of your Callings; For *every one must abide in the Calling wherein he is called of God*, Gal. 2. 11. Rom 3. 8. 1 Cor. 7 20, 24. *Yet* wherein, and as far as they *publickly own* Christ, and Christ will be *publickly honoured* by them, you must (according to your capacities) *publickly* own them, and *partake with them in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel:* whereunto all the consolations in Christ, all the comforts of Love, and the communion of the Spirit, and of the Saints, are so many quick and cogent arguments, *Phil.* 1. 7, 17, 27. & 2. 1, 2, 4.

Publick Magistrates then should not onely *do no unrighteousnes in judgement* to them, upon the informations or invigation of the ungodly; For *he that justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord*, Lev. 19. 15. Prov. 17. 15. Isa. 5. 23. But 1. should *declare* the *innocency* of their

their *perſons*, and *injuſtice* of their *proſecution*, as the *Princes* did concerning the Prophet *Jeremy*, *This man is not worthy to die, for he hath ſpoken to us in the name of the Lord our God*, Jer. 26. 16. 2. Should *defeat* the wiles and purpoſes, and *diſappoint* the wrath and power of their *adverſaries*. 3. Should *deliver* them out of the jaws of the wicked, and from the injuries of falſe witneſſes; And 4. *defend* the worth and integrity of their perſons and profeſſions, *Acts* 23 27. *Job* 29. 12. to 18. *Heb.* 1 4 *Iſa.* 59 4. By this as God is honored, ſo their government will be upheld and happy. This is the very *deſign* and *dignity* of their *Office*, which is *for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well*: And beſt accords their ends and intruſtment, their deputation by, and debt they owe to God the ſupream Governor. Remember therefore, O ye Governors of *Iſrael*, *God ſtandeth in the Congregation of the mighty. Defend and deliver his poor: Do juſtice to the afflicted and needy: Open your mouthes for the dumb in the cauſe of all ſuch as are appointed to deſtruction: Open your mouthes and judge righteouſly, and plead the cauſe of the poor againſt the oppreſſour, and ſons of violence, and of Belial*, Pſal. 82. 1, 3, 4. Prov 31. 8, 9 Jer. 22. 2, 3.

Private Chriſtians ſhould own publick Confeſſors, both privately and publickly, both as concerns their profeſſion, and in caſe of perſecution. (1) *As concerns their profeſſion.* You muſt not onely not diſquiet, or add diſtreſs to their affliction; *Galat.* 6. 17. *Pſal.* 69. 26. but muſt do whatſoever comes within your power, and correſponds to your place, (as far as will conduce to the aforeſaid ends) which may beſpeak your care for, and communion with them in the ſame fellowſhip with Chriſtians, and your conjunct zeal and ſtriving together for the ſame Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 12. 25. *Phil.* 1. 27. *Rom.* 15. 5, 6. So that you ſhould 1. *conſider* them, wherein they may or do need you to abet and aſſiſt them, *Heb.* 10. 23, 24. 2. You ſhould *counſel* them, wherein they wiſh, or may want your advice and counſel, *Pro.* 27 9. 3. You ſhould *quicken* them, when, and wherein you finde them averſe or awkward, 2 *Pet.* 1. 3. 4. You ſhould be *cautelous* of, and

for, and watch over them, wherein they may be in a hazard, especially of *apostatizing*, Heb. 3. 12, 13. 5. You should *convince* and *convert*, and recover them, wherein they have at any time abated or apostatized, *Ja.* 5. 19. *Gal.* 6. 1. 6. You should *confirm* them, when and wherein they are feeble or fluctuate, and *comfort* them wherein they faint, 1 *Thes.* 5. 11, 14. 7. In a word, you should *communicate* what in you lieth, for their spiritual furtherance, and for strengthning their hearts and hands in this holy Cause of God, *Rom.* 1. 11, 12.

(2) *In case of persecution*: You must not onely *decline* all conjunction with, and associating to them that persecute, *Pro* 1. 10, 15, 16. nor onely not *deny* your knowledge of, and acquaintance with those that profess; which cost *Peter* such a bitter repentance, *Matth.* 26. 69. *&c.* nor onely not desert your communion and assembling together with them in the more or less *publick* ordinances of Christ, which was the fearful sin of *Demas* and of some other *Apostates*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. *Heb.* 10. 25. But you should 1 *detect the plots* and confederacies (as far as they are known to you) of the persecutors, for the preservation of these; as did not only *Pauls* sisters son, but *Jonathan* also, though his *father* were interessed therein, *Act.* 23. 16 1 *Sam.* 19. 1, 23. 2. *Dissuade* (as you have opportunity) at least *disown their purposes and practice* in persecution of such; as did both he & *Gamaliel*, Act 5. 34. to 40. 3. *Declare the innocency* of their *persons*, and *inoffensiveness* of their *principles* and comportment, as also did *Jonathan*, 1 Sam. 19. 4. 5. 3 Joh 12. 4. *Defend* them in their incorrupt and holy profession, against the *imputations* of *mistake* and *malice*, as did *Abimelech*, & from intended *mischiefs* and *machinations* of violence to them, according to the occasions offered, and the orbs and callings you are in, 1 *Sam.* 22. 14 & 14. 45. 5. *Detain*, shelter and conceal their *persons* from popular fury, and the fears or force of persecution, as did good *Obadiah*, who *hid an hundred Prophets of the Lord by fifty in a cave*, as did the *disciples* concerning *Paul*, *letting him down by the wall in a basket*, 1 Kings 18. 4. Act. 9. 25. 6. *Distribute* to, and *visit* them in their *prisons*, and under persecution, not being *ashamed* of their bonds or chains,

as

as did good *Onesiphorus*, Mat. 25. 36, 43. 2 Tim 2, 8, 16. but administring to, and affectionately sympathizing with them in their necessities, according to your abilities and opportunities, and their respective exigencies, *Phil.* 4. 15, 16. *Heb.* 13. 3. 1 *Cor.* 12. 26. 7. You may not *desert* them in their persecution, when they are *seized* by men, or stand before the Judgement-seat of the Magistrate; if such *adherence* to, & *appearance* with them will more honor Christ, more hold up his cause, and more help the good of his Confessors, than your *absence* may or can. This was the sin of the disciples, and is of that signal dye, that the Apostle cannot mention it without a special *mark* of its malignity, and of their miscarriage, who were guilty of it; nor without supplication for special mercy in the forgiveness of it. *At my first answer no man withstood me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*, Mat. 26. 56. 2 Tim. 4 16. Lastly, you should (so far as concerns you, or falls within your compass) *deliver* them out of their persecutions. And doubtless (so far as lawful) *interpositions* with *men*, and *intercession* with *God* will prevail for them, you may not *omit* either of them. So did *Reuben* for his brother, and the *Church* for *Peter*, *Gen* 37. 21, 22. *Act* 12. 5. *And if thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain:* (*viz.* when it is in the power of thy hand, and agreeable to thy place and calling) *If thou sayest, Behold we knew it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?* Prov. 24 11, 12.

Quest. *Whether and when we are to lay down our lives for the Confessors of Jesus?*

'Tis true, there is a *time* when we are to *lay down our life for the brethren*, 1 Joh. 3 16. not in a way of *sin*, or of *sedition*, thereby to *save* them: but in way of *peculiar serviceableness to* and *patient suffering for*, and with them, when, and as the interest of Christ, the edification of the Church, and the exigencies of Confessors require it from us: By which we are to be ruled in this case, as *Esther*, *Paul*, and *Epaphroditus* were, *Esth.* 4 16. 2 *Cor.* 12. 15. *Phil.*

Phil. 2.30. This being the *highest discovery*, and speaking the *highest degree* of *love*; and *life* it self being of so high a dearness to man, is not therefore to be prostituted, but upon an *high* consideration, and which may *compensate* the loss of it, (at least) if not *preponderate* the same, *Joh.* 15.13. *Job* 2.4.

All this well becomes the *supream* Governor, when the glory of God and good of his people cannot be *better* otherwise provided for (in which case the Governors of *Israel*, *Gideon* and *Jepthah jeoparded themselves, and put their lives in their hands*, against the Lord and his servants adversaries, *Judges* 5.12. 9.17. 12.3. So it becomes their *subjects* and inferiors in government, when *led* by their Conduct, or with *leave* of them, their Commanders: Which was *Davids* case against *Goliah*, and *Zebuluns* and *Naphtali's* against *Sisera* and his host, 1 *Sam.* 19.5. *Judges* 5.18.

Every Christian then is not upon *every* account to expose his *life* for the sake of a *brother*, or yet of the *brotherhood*: nor at all, in compliance to the *lusts* of any man, or men, which was the sin of that *Sorceress*, 1 Sam. 28.21. But if so be the glory of God, the Gospel of Christ, and the good of the Church cannot *better* be secured or served than by the *hazard of your life* in, and for the good of the Confessor, in ways agreeable to the *peace, piety* and *patience of* the *Gospel*. (For I abhor, and you should, all ways of tumult and civil rupture) If so, you should not count your lives dear unto you for the name of Christ, as nor did *Paul* and *Barnabas*, Acts 35. 26.20. 24. Whether by 1 *presenting* your *selves* and *supplications* for them to the *King*, as *Esther* did to *Ahasuerus*; or by 2 a *supply* of the *lack of others service* to them in their straits and captivity, as *Epaphroditus* did to *Paul*: or by 3 *preserving* and *hiding* them from the persecutors cruelty, as *Obadiah* did the Prophets, or else from popular commotions, as it seems *Priscilla* and *Aquila* did *Paul*, either at *Corinth* or *Ephesus*, *for his life laying down their own necks*, Esther 4.16. Phil. 2.30. Rom. 16 4. with Acts 18.12,23. 1 Kings 18 4. That (with these limits) we should *lay down our lives to save the brethren*, we have the *open obligation* not onely of our Saviors *pattern*, but of his *precept*

cept likewiſe, 1 *John* 3. 16. *And if in this caſe, I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, I joy and rejoyce with you all*, Phil. 2. 17.

2. *Will the Expliciteneſs of your profeſsion in a paſsive way beſt ſerve the aforeſaid ends?* You muſt then contentedly *deny your ſelves, take up your croſs, and follow Chriſt.* Nor *bonds*, nor *baniſhment*, nor *death* may *move* you out of your Chriſtian conſtancy, to teſtifie the Goſpel of the Grace of God, according to your particular capacities, *Mark* 8. 34. *Math.* 10. 16, 17, *&c. Joh.* 16. 1, 2. *Acts* 20. 23, 24. But of this frequently in this Diſcourſe. In ſhort therefore; As God may be beſt glorified, his Goſpel beſt inlarged, the godly beſt edified; ſo muſt you witneſs a good confeſſion, either by 1. *enduring the threatned fury* with the *three Children, Daniel, Stephen*, and that *Cloud of Martyrs*, Heb 11. 36, 37. Dan. 3. 18, &c. 6. 10, &c. Acts 7. 2, &c. 2. Or by *eſcaping and timely flight*, as did *Moſes by faith*, and therein *endured, as ſeeing him who is inviſible*, Heb. 11. 27.

Queſt. *Whether it is lawful, and when for Confeſſors to flee in caſe of perſecution?*

Anſw. No doubt, in *ſome* caſes: or our Savior Chriſt had never *preſcribed* it to his *ſervants*, or *practiſed* it *himſelf*, as we finde he did, *Math.* 10. 23. *John* 10. 39. The preceding Rules may prompt you a reſolution when it may be done, and when declined, if they are applied.

(1) You may take the *liberty of flight*, or rather ſhould take it to be your *duty to flie*, if the aforeſaid ends will be better furthered by your flight than by your ſtay; As moſt times it is when the perſecution is *perſonal* and *particular*. In this caſe *God himſelf* inſtructs *Elijah* to eſcape and hide himſelf, firſt at *Cherith*, and after that at *Zarephath*, whither he flies a ſecond time alſo for Sanctuary upon a new emergency, 1 *Kings* 17 3, 9. & 19. 3. The Prophets of the Lord are *hid* by fifties *in a cave*, from the fury of the perſecutors, by that *pious* Courtier *Obadiah*, 1 Kings 18. 4.

Urijah

Urijah flees into *Egypt* from the force of *Jehojakim*, Jer. 26. 21. *Paul* and *Barnabas* frequently provide for their own ſafety by a timely retreat, or flight rather, from popular fury; *Acts* 14. 6. & 17. 14. & 9. 25, 29, 30. Nay is the perſecution more *publick* and *general*? If you may *beſt* ſecure theſe *publick ends* (as well as your private intereſt) by flight, there is *nothing* to *illegitimate*, but *much* to *encourage* it. *The woman flees into the wilderneſs*, Revel. 12. God prepares her a place and proviſion; as alſo wings for flight, *verſe* 6, 14. After *Stevens* death *there was a great perſecution againſt the Church which was at Hieruſalem*: And *Luke* puts this *mark* upon it; *they were all ſcattered abroad*; Acts 8. 1, 4. And *Paul* commends *them* (in that day of general diſtreſs) as *of whom the world was not worthy*, who then *wandred about*, Heb. 11. 38.

(2) You muſt tarry, and *may not flie without ſin*, when theſe ends will be *beſt* accompliſhed through your ſtay and inmeration in your Countrey. While *Paul* may beſt forward the concerns of Chriſt at *Corinth* by his *continuance* there, he may not flinch or flie one foot from thence. Religious *Steven* will ride out the Storm at *Hieruſalem*, though it rain *ſtones* and ſlaughter; ſo long as the *Goſpel* may riſe and live by *his* death and downfal. And the *Apoſtles remained at Hieruſalem, when the reſt were ſcattered abroad*, and the rage was ſignal, *Acts* 18. 9, 10, 11. C. 7. & 8. 1. Though you may not ſacrifice your lives or liberties to anothers *luſt*, and the Churches *loſs*; yet your ſelf-ſafety muſt not be *valued above*, but *ventured for* the Churches gain and Chriſts glory. As you are now circumſtanced then, will theſe ends be *beſt* provided for by abiding your place, and ſtanding your poſt and ground? Then do not either face about, or flie away. Say rather with ſtout and reſolute *Nehemiah*, *Should ſuch a man as I flie? And who is there, that being as I am, would go into the Temple to ſave his life? I will not go in*, Nehemiah 6. 11. The glory of his profeſſion, and good of his people, far preponderated all fleſhly perſwaſions. Though our Saviour did prudently decline heretofore thoſe *politick* Engines, whereby the

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Phariſees did ſeek to enſnare and apprehend him; Yet, *when his hour was come*, wherein he might beſt glorifie his Father, and give an Example of enduring to his Faithful, he went not any more from, but *went forth* to the Officers who came to make him their priſoner, and conſulted nothing ſo much as to kill him, *John* 18. 3, 4, 5.

Queſt. *Whether we may lawfully flee when committed to priſon, or ſeized on by the Magiſtrate, and in his power?*

Though you may lawfully quit your ſelves from the ſeizure of *private men*, and (without one laſh from Conſcience) you may break from *their* cuſtody and priſons, unleſs you have *promiſed* to the contrary, which you muſt *then keep*, though to your *own prejudice*, Pſal. 15. 4. And though you may carefully *prevent* the *ſeizure* of the *publick Magiſtrate* by all ſuch means as do conſiſt with *juſtice*, *charity*, and *piety*: Yet, when you are once *ſeized* by his Officers, and according to his order, or caſt into the Priſon-houſes; now *all* ways of flight are ſhut up againſt you. You may not now wrench or flie off, no not in any wiſe. For,

(1) This would *betray* the *honor* of Chriſt, and of your Cauſe in and for Chriſt, to the ſcorn and joyes of his and your enemies, and to the ſhame and grief of his and your friends.

(2) This will be a *breach* upon the *Ordinance* of Chriſt, for ſuch is *Magiſtracy*, and your obedience and *ſubmiſſion* is required thereunto, *though you ſuffer wrongfully*, 1 Pet. 2. 13. to 20.

(3) This were to *break* from the *office* whereunto you are *now called* of Chriſt, which is to *ſuffer patiently*, ibid ver. 20, 21.

(4) This were to *bid defiance* to the holy Example of *Chriſt himſelf*, *whoſe ſteps you ſhould follow*; as alſo of his ſervants, whoſe *examples* you ſhould imitate, *wherein they imitated Chriſt*, 1 Pet. 2. 21. 1 Cor. 11. 1.

These never did so much as *attempt* an escape out of the Magistrates power, or prisons when they might, and easily could have attained it, without the mission of an Angel, or the dismission of the Magistrate, or some Commission from God, *Mat.* 26. 52, 53. *Acts* 5. 19. & 12. 7. & 16. 27, 28, 37, 39.

(5) This would *bespeak* our *unbelief* of all the premises and ensurances we have from Christ, in prevention of our fears and vexing cares, when apprehended by and arraigned before Civil Magistrates, *for his Names sake*, Luke 12. 11, 12. Math. 10. 19. 20. Mark 13. 11.

(6) In brief, this *bears a direct opposition* to all those *ends* whereby we are *obliged*, and should be *ordered* in the case of Confession, as hath been premonished.

Concluf. 2. By what *openness* or observedness of Confession you may best obtain those ends, you are obliged to that *degree* of openness and observedness. For the *end* doth not onely direct us in the *quality* of the means we should use, but in the *quantity* likewise. As the *Merchant* is directed by his end in the voyage, both as to *what merchandize* he should load his Vessel with, and to *what measure*, or with how much he should load the same also.

Quest. *To what degree of explicit Confession are we bound in the times, whereupon we are now cast?*

Though there be *no man* discharged from the *most open* confession of Christ, by any calamity whatsoever, that is therefore impending over him (upon pretences of the perils he shall run, or that prudence should restrain him (where these ends will be openly obtained; [of which we have spoken somewhat before, and shall more fully speak in the Tenth Proposition] yet I humbly conceive, that as the *circumstances vary*, according to the *variety* of *places* wherein, and of *persons* among whom we have to converse, and therewith to confess Christ; So, the circumstances varying, the Case or *Confession* of Christ; which is to be *ruled* by them;

them, *pro hic & nunc*, cannot but vary likewiſe as concerns the *degrees* of its openeſs or expliciteneſs. And therefore as I dare not determine *all* perſons to the *ſame* degree of open profeſſion, ſo nor the *ſame perſons* in *all places*, or to and among *all people*: but muſt content my ſelf with this *general aſſertion*, whereof *each mans conſcience* muſt make a faithful and impartial *application*, according to the *circumſtances* he is in.

Your confeſſion of Chriſt muſt bear *convenience* to theſe ends, and to the circumſtances you are in; and ſo be either *more publick* or more *private*, according as theſe ends (the glory of God, the growth of his Goſpel and good of ſouls) may be thereby moſt and beſt promoted. (1) *Prudence directs it.* That we *proportion* the means to the end. As the *Phyſician doſeth his phyſick* to the *capacity* and circumſtances of his *Patient*, and your ſelves proportion your food and exerciſes as may beſt *recover*, or retain eaſe and health. (2) *Piety dictates it.* That your acts of zeal for, and ſervice to God be *duly timed* and of *dueſt temper*; which makes them *like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver*, while they are fitted to the ſeaſon, and freed from ſinful exceſſes and defects, *Prov* 25. 11. *Eccl.* 7. 16, 17. (3) *The pious have done ſo* The *Prophets* of old, as alſo *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* ſince uſed *different* degrees of expliciteneſs in their preaching and profeſſion, according to the *difference* of *places* and *perſons* in which, and among whom they were, in the ſame Nation, and as would beſt comport with theſe ends and the exigencies of the times and things. You have Chriſt and his ſervants ſometime uſing the *reriements* of the wilderneſs, of an houſe, of an upper Chamber for preaching; at other times they are found in the villages, in the Cities, in the ſtreets, in the Marker, in the Synagogue, in the Temple. So the *Evangeliſts* record of *him*, and *Luke* in the *Acts of the Apoſtles* rehearſes of *them*. *Paul* tells us that he had *preached both publickly and from houſe to houſe*, nor *onely there*, nor *onely here*; but as opportunities were offered, and the ends of his office might be obtained, ſometime *publickly*, ſometime *privately* (eſpecially) *to them which were of reputation, leſt by any means he ſhould run, or had run in vain*, Act. 20. 20. Gal. 2. 2.

Hence then *where, when,* and *among whom* theſe ends will be beſt effected, by the *eminent explicitneſs* of your confeſſion; you are *debtors* therein, and muſt *diſcharge* the ſame. You may not *provoke Chriſt*, or *prejudice* your *conſcience*, or his *cauſe*, by putting him off with the *worſt* and *weakeſt* of your profeſſion; *the torn*, and *the lame*, and *the ſick*, or *what coſt you nothing. Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon? And ſhould I accept this at your hands? For I am a great King, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen*, 1 Chr. 21. 24. Mal. 1. 6, 7, 8, 13, 14.

Propoſ 8. At what time ſoever we are engaged to an open confeſſion of Chriſt, we are eſpecially intereſſed to confeſs thoſe *matters* of Chriſt which are of moſt *ponderous conſideration*, as alſo thoſe which are moſt under *preſent queſtion* and contradiction. 1. The importance of ſuch matters. 2. The intereſt of our Mediator. 3. The influence hereof as a means to the aforeſaid ends do plainly engage us to it. 4. As alſo the iterated practice of the holy *Apoſtles* and *Prophets* do exemplifie it before us. (1) *Matters of moſt ponderous conſideration.* Though there be nothing *ſmall* in Religion in a *ſimple* and *abſolute* conſideration, as being revealed and required by, and referring us to the *great* God; yet in a ſenſe *comparatively*, there are ſome truths of a *greater* and *higher*, others of a *leſſer* and *lower* moment, if the *matter* and *next end* be conſidered. And you may not without *Phariſaical* and horrid hypocriſie, in order to *Mint* and *Anniſe* and *Cummin* (matters of inferior worth) *omit the weightier matters of the Law, Judgement, Mercy and Faith. Theſe things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*, Mat. 23. 23. Luke 11. 42. *The doctrine which is according to godlineſs*, that which tends *moſt to godly edifying. The great moments of Eternity, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus* ſhould be the *onely ordinary matter* of our ſpiritual and zealous conteſt, 1 *Tim.* 1. 3, 4. & 6. 3, 4. *Acts* 20. 21. 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. 2. Matters under moſt *preſent queſtion and contradiction* ſhould be the *ſubject* of our preſent

preſent confeſſions, ſuitable to the *importance* of ſuch matters, and the *influence* they have upon the manners and minds of men. 1. *Charity to ſouls* calleth for this from us, that they may be antidoted and fenced againſt the ſpreading gangrene and contagion of the times, or awakened and delivered there from, *Ja.* 5. 19, 20. 2. *The cauſe and credit of our Saviour* calleth for it, in owning his truth and oppoſing error and ungodlineſs to the teeth of enemies, *Rev.* 2. 2, 3, 13. 3. *The conveniency hereof to the ſeaſon* may quicken us, whereby our confeſſions become both more *beautiful in themſelves*, and more *beneficial to ſouls*, Ecl. 3. 1, 11. Prov. 25. 11. 4. And this is the *Copy* which the Saints have left us. Let me offer a few inſtances.

1. *In matters of faith* How do the *Apoſtles* and *Brethren* all along moſt juſtifie, & moſt inſiſt upon what was of *preſent* inſtance, and impugned by the enemies. Againſt the ſtubborn *Jews* how open, and often are their aſſertions and argumentations! that he was the real and alone Chriſt or Meſſiah, That he roſe again, That by him alone is redemption; That he is the end of the Law for righteouſneſs, *&c.* Againſt the *Pſeudo-Chriſtians*, how proper, preſſing, particular are they! Againſt the hereſies of *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, how articulate, argumentive, affectionate is *John* in his *Goſpel*, and in his *Epiſtles*! *Paul* nips every error in the bud or bloſſom; no ſooner doth it *peep up*, but he *preacheth* it *down*, in the *Acts* and in his *Epiſtles*. They ſtill proportioned the *medicine* to the *malady*, and ſpread the *playſter* of profeſſion according to the *parts*, or *patients* which they had in *cure*. No ſooner were truths *queſtioned* by others, but they were confeſſed, confirmed by them; and the others confuted, *Galatians* 2. 4, 5. *Acts* 15. 1, 2, 6, 7, *&c.* *Revelations* 2. 2 *&c.*

2. *In matters of Worſhip.* The holy Confeſſors both of the Old and New Teſtament, did proportion their Zeal herein to the *preſent ſeaſon*, and pollutions *then* ſenſ'd. We find the Confeſſours of the *Old Teſtament* ſtill *crying down*, and as farre as concerned them in their ſeveral capacities (both *Princes*, Prieſts, *Prophets* and *people*) *caſting out*, or *keeping off* all humane devices

and inventions in and for Gods worship, *Num* 15. 39. *Psal.* 106. 39. 1 *Kings* 12 33. with 13 1, *&c.* All depravings and immixing with Gods institutted worship, together with the advices and commands thereof, approbations of and concurrence thereunto. Witness the *Histories* of *Hezekiahs*, *Joash* and *Josiahs* times and others, as well as the *Writings* of the *Prophets*, Deut. 13 6,7,8. *Hosea*, *Malachi*, *Jeremie*, *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, &c. Thus also doth Christ himself, and the sacred Confessors of the *New Testament* witness aloud to the *spiritualness*, *strictness*, *power*, *purity*, and for the *preserving of Gods worship whole, holy and incorrupted*, Joh. 4 23,24. 2 Cor. 11. 3. 1 Cor. 11. 1, &c. And against the *superstitions* and *super-inducements* of men in, and upon it; whether it be by *tradition* from *others*, with the pretexts of *Authority* and *Antiquity*, Acts 17. 22. Mat. 7. 7,8,9. Mat. 15. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 18. or whether *taken* up by men *themselves*, or in *conformity* to the sense and commandments of others, upon pretences of *decency*, *inoffensiveness*, or *humility*, Col. 2 18 20,21, 2. Gal. 2 12,13 14. And whereas for anticipating and allaying the *hatred of*, and their *affliction by* the *Jews*, there were that pleaded for and admitted the *abrogated Ceremonies* of the law. How loud doth the Apostle test fie against them, as *beggerly elements*, and calleth upon Christians to *stand fast in their liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and that they be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage*; In his *Epistles* to the *Galatians*, and to the *Hebrews*.

3. *In matters of indifferency*: When Christians would confine one the other to their own minde and measure, and did contemn and condemn one the other concerning the use and disuse of them; The *Apostle* doth now insert what concerns these into his *testimony* to the truths of Jesus. *Asserting the liberty of Christians* in that *case*, and advising to limit their practice within the just confines of inoffensiveness; That the *strong* do not *impose* upon the weak, nor the *weak* injuriously *censure* the strong: which he presseth by several *arguments*, Rom. C 14 & 15. 1 Cor. 8. which relate unto *Christ* the *Lord*, as well as the *liberty* of *Christians*. The *Apostle* doth not *compose* the *controversie* by *imposing* these indifferencies

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and inſtructing them that (in this caſe) they became *neceſſary*. *Rome* had not then learnt *any ſuch doctrines*, or *others* from *Rome*. The *charity* of Confeſſors, and *verities* confeſſed did then plainly run in *another* channel.

Prop. 9. At what time ſoever we are engaged to this open confeſſion of Chriſt, we ſhould eſpecially endeavour the *healing* of thoſe *evils* which either *cloud*, or are *contrary* hereunto amongſt Chriſtians. The *intereſt* of Chriſt requireth it, the *edification* of Chriſtians, the *eminency* of confeſſion, with the reſpect to the emerging circumſtances, and the *evils* alſo to be contravened by our confeſſion. In ſhort then: (1) Do we foreſee an *approaching careleſneſs*, the more ſhould we quicken them by our lives and lips to an holy care and heedful circumſpection. That they *take heed and look diligently, leſt there be in any of them a root of bitterneſs or unbelief, that ſhould ſpring up to the defilement of themſelves, or to their departure from the living God*, Heb. 3. 13. and 12. 15. (2) Do we finde an *apoſtatizing* from, or *caſting off* of their holy profeſſion? we ſhould *reſtore them in the ſpirit of meekneſs*, though with a *difference* of expreſſion, to different perſons, and in different circumſtances. We ſhould remember ſuch, *how they have born and had patience*, and rouze them up out of their ſpiritual oſcitancy & ſupineſs, to the *doing of their firſt works*, Gal. 6. 1. Jude 22, 23. Rev. 2. 2. to 6. (3) Or do we feel an *abatement* and *coldneſs* through the hazards and calamities of the times? We ſhould the more *conſider one another, to provoke to love and good works*, and ſo *hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering*; And with *Peter* in like times, *ſtir up their pure minds in way of remembrance*, Heb. 10. 23, 24, 25. 2 Pet. 1. 13. & 3. 1. (4) Are they framing *apologies* and ſewing fig-leaves together for covering of any or all this? We ſhould remove the *coverings*, and with our Savior repreſent the *cauſe*, and what will be the *conſequence* of ſuch fear, ſhame and ſilence, *Math.* 10. 33. *Luke* 9. 26 & 12. 9. And may reaſon herein with them as concerns their ſafety and duty, and their ſin and danger, as *Mordecai* doth with *Eſther* in the like exigence, *Eſth.* 4. 13, 14.

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Propoſ. 10. *No corruptions, no calamities* whatſoever, whether *imminent* or *inflicted*, can *diſcharge* us from the *Debt* of that *kinde* or *degree* of poſitive and open Confeſſion, by which the glory of God in the good of ſouls, and Goſpel of his Son will be beſt promoted. Enough may ſeem to have been premiſed already in proof of, and perſwaſion hereunto. [See eſpecially Propoſition 6 and 7.] Yet becauſe ſuch Doctrines will hardly down with *fleſh and blood*, which will divert and draw back, I will ſubjoyn ſomething more.

(1) Let the *conſideration of the end move you.* Is the *glory* of *God* think you, your upmoſt *end*, or *no*? If *not*; *Be aſtoniſhed O ye Heavens at this, and be horribly afraid; be ye very deſolate ſaith the Lord*, upon this caſe, *Jer.* 2. 12. *Iſa.* 1. 2. *Mic.* 6. 1, 2, 3. That the *whole Creation*, the very dumb and inanimate creatures ſhould *declare his glory*, and in conformity to his unbounded government, and for the good of the Univerſe, ſhould deny their *being*, their *motion*; that *light* bodies *contrary to their nature*, ſhould move *downward*; and *heavy* bodies contrary to their nature, ſhould move *upward* to preſerve the Compages of things together: That the *Sun* ſhould ſtand ſtill and go back at his beck, and for mans benefit; And that *man* whom God hath inveſted with an *internal principle of knowledge and conſcience*, to improve all means and motives to theſe high and noble ends, that *man* on whom God hath imprinted the *ſpecial marks* of his *love* and *likeneſs* above all the Creatures, on this ſide *Angels*, to engage him in the purſuit of this end: That *man* whom God hath ſo *intereſſed in*, and *intruſted with* his *Glory* by all the mercies of Creation, Conſervation, and in Chriſt, that he may intend this end? Yea more that a *Chriſtian*, who by that *Name* profeſſeth to and before all the world, that he doth *firſt ſeek the Kingdome of God and the righteouſneſs thereof*, that he is *no longer his own*, but the *Lords*: That he doth not *live*, nor may *dye to himſelf*, *but to the Lord*; That himſelf and all he hath and is, is devoted and delivered up to his ſervice! That a *Chriſtian* who hath the *Scriptures* of God, and *Spirit* of God,

God, beſides the *Servants* of God, to inſtigate and inſtruct him in, and ſo many *Ordinances*, *Offices*, and *Obligations* to and from *Chriſt* to engage him to this end; That a Chriſtian ſhould not, all this while, have intended the glory of God as his *laſt* end and ſcope; Well may I ſay, *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O earth.* But I may not thus dilate. But do you ſay that you *have* intended, and ſtill *do* the Glory of God upmoſt? Be it ſo; and can you decline that duty, becauſe of the danger that attends it, whereby his Glory in your and others good will be viſibly furthered? Will not men part with *any*, with *all* elſe that is *ſubordinate*, rather than with that end which is their *ſupream*? Will not the *Mariner* rather part with *all his loading* than with *one life*? How unworthy then are they of God, and of his Goſpel, whom a *Farm*, or *Friend*, or *Father*, or *Wife*, or *Life*, or any *Fruition*, or *Relation* whatſoever, ſhall hold from their *Duty* to God and Godlineſs, from a Duty to *his Glory*, and therein to *their own felicity*, as this is manifeſtly? *Luke* 14 12, 34. *Math.* 10. 37.

(2) Let the *Conſtellation of Martyrs* excite you. Did they boggle at this Duty becauſe it would bring danger, when their Confeſſion would give God the glory? No Dungeon, no Den, no Diſtreſs, no Stones, no Straights, no Fire, no Furnace, no Bonds, nor Baniſhment, nor bloody Tortures did or could move them from *this* Duty, when they ſaw a *manifeſt door of hope* open, that they ſhould adminiſter to others good, and to Gods glory. Recal the many *inſtances* I have given you, and read over that *Martyrology*, Heb. 11. Tell me, was not the Confeſſion of Chriſt their *Duty*, in the Caſes before them, notwithſtanding the arduous difficulties and calamities did viſibly enough attend it? Doubtleſs it was their *Duty*; for we ſhould call them rather *Mad men* than *Martyrs*, that would expoſe themſelves to ſuch extremities for but a matter *arbitrary*. If it were *their Duty* to confeſs Chriſt in ſuch extremities for ſerving this end, how got *you a diſpenſation*? Should you not *be followers of them, and take them for an example of profeſſion, and*

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of patience, Heb. 6. 12. *Jam.* 5. 10, 11. *Seeing then you are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of Witneſſes*, (or Martyrs) *ſee that you run with patience the race that is ſet before you, looking unto Jeſus*, Heb. 12. 1, 2, 3.

(3) *Let the command of your Maſter engage you.* Need I give you the many expreſs and iterated commands of Chriſt again to this purpoſe? I muſt remit you to what hath been ſaid already. Is publick confeſſion of Chriſt and his concerns a *plain command*, as hath been inſtanced once and again? Remember *you* may not *looſe* where *Chriſt* hath *bound* you. From what *he* hath made *duty*, *who*, or *what* can *diſcharge* you? He hath not made the terms of your diſcharge from it at any time to be the *extremity* of your ſuffering; for he hath often *warned* you of this, and *armed* you for this: but in that theſe *ends* will not thereby be *ſecured*, but *ſhipwrackt* rather, as you have ſeen already *Propoſ.* 6 and 7.

(4) Let the *competition of intereſts* be attended by you. 1. Between *whom* is it? Between *God* and *man*; the *Creator* and the *creature*; your *ſelves* and your *Savior*; Whether *they* muſt now loſe *their honor*, and *your obedience* by the *ſuſpenſion* and *ſecrecy* of your confeſſion? Or *you* muſt loſe your *hopes* of eaſe, honor, *&c.* by the *plaineſs* and *publickneſs* of your confeſſion? Not onely Chriſtianity, but the whole *Creation* will come in and plead againſt you, and for him in this caſe, *Pſal.* 19. 1, 2, *&c. Rom.* 1. 20, 21. 2. Between *what* is the competition? Let the matter, motives, main-ſpring & ſcope be conſidered. Is it not between *ſpirituals*, yea *eternals* and your *temporals*? Whether *they* muſt not be *foregone* (at leaſt) *forborn* rather than *theſe forſaken*? And if the moments of Salvation and your immortal Souls be of no more worth than this momentary eaſe and enjoyments, then farewell confeſſion, conſcience, and the Kingdom of grace and glory alſo. Is it not between a *ſpirit of faith* and ſound *love* on the one hand, and a *ſpirit of fear* and *ſelf-love* on the other? Whether they muſt not ſit down in ſilence for the ſake of theſe, and theſe ſteer, ſway and ſuperſede them? Whether the *fleſh* muſt not onely oppoſe, but *overcome* the ſpirit, and the ſpirit be ordered and over-

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born by the fleſh? If this muſt be granted, tell us no more of godlineſs. Is it not between *Gods glory*, and *ſelf-ſafety*? Whether that muſt not be *ſubordinated* unto *this*, and this be ſecured and ſought, beyond and above that? Whether (ſince one muſt loſe and part with ſomething) God ſhould not rather loſe his preſent *government* and *glory*, then *thou* ſhouldſt part with thy preſent life and liberty? To this iſſue it runs, and if thou art thus reſolved, I muſt call thee no more a man, but a *monſter*, but a *devil*, that wouldſt ſtoop and bend *heaven* to *earth*, and ſet *man* above his *Maker*, and as if this were not madneſs enough, (interpretatively and in effect) to deny thy ſelf herein, to be a *Creature*, thou makeſt thy *Creator* beneath the *Creature*. Oh horrid and helliſh blaſphemy!

Queſt. *Whether it be conſiſtent with prudence, that we confeſs Chriſt, eſpecially ſo* publiquely, *when it will conclude us under perſecution?*

Though *Carnal policy* (which the world oft calls *prudence*, but God counts *fooliſhneſs*) will eaſily indulge the neglect of duty, when it will evidently infer danger? And though *Moral prudence*, meerly ſuch, doth not *ſubordinate* ſelf-ends to our Saviors intereſs, and ſo *ſteers* by its own *compaſs* in theſe ſignal concernments: And though both theſe *ſerve themſelves* upon Chriſt and religion in men, who ſhould deny themſelves for ſerving him and ſecuring it: Yet, *Chriſtian prudence*, *which is firſt pure, then peaceable*, will flee no duty, to foreſtal a danger. Its buſineſs is to *fear the Lord, and forſake the evil*, *to deal in knowledge, and to do his Commandments*, Iſaiah 3. 1-7. Proverbs 13. 16. Pſalm 111. 10. Behold, *the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil is underſtanding.* This, this is the *true wiſdom*, with God and before man, *to keep his commandments and do them* (whereof confeſſion, *open* confeſſion is one.) *This is your wiſdom and your underſtanding in the ſight of the nations*,

which shall hear all these Statutes, and say, Surely this great Nation is a wise and understanding people, Job 28. 28. Deut. 4 6. 'Tis true, *the prudent man layeth up and concealeth knowledge*, from a foolish loquacity and vain ostentation at *all* times, and when it will not further, but obviate his end at *any* time, *Proverbs* 10. 14. & 12. 23. But when his *end* will be *obviously obtained* by it, *the heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips; his lips disperse knowledge, and drop as the Honey-comb, he useth his knowledge aright, and now he poureth out what he had kept in till afterward*, Proverbs 16. 23. and 15. 2, 7. and 29. 11. But more strictly; Let the Masters, the Maximes, and Mirrours of Prudence be consulted with upon the Case.

(1) *Let the Masters of prudence be consulted.* That is with them the *best prudence*, which pitcheth on and determineth you to the best end, and picketh out and directs you to the best meanes, and prompts or discovereth the best mannagement of all circumstances to the obtaining of this end, by the use of these meanes. Even the *creatures* without, and *natural conscience* within will tell you, that the glorifying and enjoyment of God is the *best end*. *Scriptures* and *enlightned Conscience* will tell you, that the Confession of Christ is a *means* in order to this end; and that the *best* Confession (which is the most *explicite*, when this end may be thereby obtained) is the *best* means of this sort or kinde, *Philippians* 2. 11. *Acts* 21. 19, 20. And that the *best* mannagement of Circumstances is that which best conduceth to, and whereby you may best come to (not *inferiour* ends, but) *this* which is the *highest* end, *Galatians* 1. 23, 24. 1 *Peter* 4. 14.

(2) *Let the Maximes of prudence be considered.* I shall mention three.

1. That we *anticipate the greatest evil.* Let Conscience speak, whether *sin* or *suffering*; the *forbearance of duty*, or *falling into danger*, be the *greatest evil?* Heb. 11. 25. Job 36. 21. *The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself*, Pro. 22 3. & 27. 12.

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Be it underſtood of the *evil of ſuffering*. But, what evil of ſuffering is ſo great, as the loſs of heaven, of the ſoul, of the life eternal? *Luke* 13. 28. *Math.* 16. 26. which is the ordinary effect of not confeſſing Chriſt, *Math.* 10. 33. *Luke* 9. 24, 25, 26. The loſſes of earth, of eſtates, of liberties, of life natural is not to be compared with that loſs, and yet do you in fear of this loſs forbear your Confeſſion?

2. That we *aſſure the greateſt good*: Again, Let Conſcience ſpeak, whether the crown of glory, communion with God, Chriſt, the comforts of his Goſpel before us, and of his grace to and in us, which will conſequence your confeſſion of Chriſt, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Math.* 10. 32. *Luke* 12. 8. be not a *greater good* in themſelves, and to your ſouls, than the goods, grandure and glittering profits, pleaſures, and preferments, which keep you from the confeſſion of Chriſt. And yet will not you profeſs *him*, becauſe you will not part with *them*.

3. That we *adhere to the ſafeſt courſe, and of ſtedieſt and longeſt conſequence*. Yet let Conſcience ſpeak: Whether you ſhould in prudence run the hazards of *eternity*, rather than of *time*? of the life and liberty that *periſheth*, rather than of that which *endureth*? Whether it be not far the ſafer courſe to ſecure the *main* of Chriſtianity, and of your comforts in the preſence of Chriſt, peace of Conſcience, *&c.* which is done by perſevering in your confeſſion? *Rom.* 10. 9, 10. 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. *Rev.* 3. 5, 8, 9. then to ſecure the *meer acceſſaries* thereof, (of which the *worſt* of men have oftentimes the *moſt*.) in a plentiful eſtate, or whatever proſperous outward enjoyments that may be acquired by ſuch politick compliances and concealments? In ſhort, be your ſelves the *Judges*, whether it be the ſafeſt courſe to ſecure the *world to come*, and therewith ſo much of *this* alſo, as will beſt further our main felicity, and our Maſters glory, which is done by your open Confeſſion? Or to *ſave this world*, with the *loſs* of *that*, and perhaps of *this* alſo, which is the dreadful iſſue of not confeſſing Chriſt, and of denying him, *Mark* 8. 35. *Matthew* 10. 39.

(3) Let the *mirrours of prudence be consulted*; Christ himself, or his choicest servants. *In Christ were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*: He is the *mighty Councellour*, Col. 2. 3. Isaiah 9. 6. And lo what himself did; and how he hath *directed* his Servants. Oh! How his profession grew to *greater degrees of expliciteness*, as the obtaining of these ends grew more obvious! And how plain and *full* was that last profession of his, which was in his *greatest perils*, and to the face of his *greatest persecutours*! [John 19. 33 to 39. 1 Timothy 6. 13.] Tis true, he hath directed his servants, to be *as wise as Serpents*, in the confession of himself: But not with a *Machiavilian policy*, but with an harmless *Dove-like innocency*. And that this wisdom in Confession, which he calls for, is plainly consistent with the *greatest publiqueness* thereof, *in the open light and upon the house-tops*: and with the *greatest perils* thereupon, in point of lively-hood, liberty and life it self, from offended rulers, from open rage and houshold relations; is abundantly legible by every one, that will look into that chapter, *Matthew* 10. 5. *ad finem*. Let the *Copies* of his *Saints* be consulted also. Ordinarily the *more eminent* they were for prudence, the *more explicite*, they were in their profession, under *extremest* perils, when these ends would be thereby promoted. *Moses* exchanges *renown* and *riches*, for *reproaches* and poverty, and quits his *honor* in the kingdom and his hopes to the Crown of Egypt, rather then he will quit the former, and that he may come to a further expliciteness of Confession. Yet was he not only educated *in all the learning of the Egyptians*, but one of extraordinary inspiration by, and intercourse with God, and beyond the insuing Prophets, *Hebrews* 11. 24---28. with *Acts* 7. 22. *Deuteronomy* 34. 10. *Daniel* will not hide his *family-duties*, when it best fits these designes, though he shall thereby fall into the *Lions Den*: Yet was he a man *of an excellent spirit*, knowledge, and understanding, and *in whom was the spirit of the holy Gods*, Daniel 6. 10. with chapter 5. 12. 4. 8. How open was *Stephens* Confession, in that open Combination, against his person, and profession! *Acts* 7. Yet was he a man *full of faith*,

faith, and power, and of that wiſdom, which none were able to reſiſt, chapter 6. 8, 10. *Paul* is a famous inſtance of all the parts and publickneſs of profeſsion, in the midſt of the greateſt perſecutions.

Yet as no bonds, or bloodineſs of the perſecutors, or beſeechings of the people, upon the evidence of his perils could move him, *Acts* 20 23,24. & 21. 11, 12, 13, 14. So, was he a man of ſingular and ſurpaſsing learning, of ſpecial and ſignal prudence with man, and ſtrangely proſpered of God herein, *Acts* 26. 44. 1 *Cor* 3. 10.

QUESTION. 8.

How may and ſhould we confeſs Chriſt?

THis Queſtion comprehends both the *meanes how*, and whereby we *may*, and the *manner how*, or wherein we *muſt*, confeſs Chriſt. I muſt ſpeak to both, touching the meanes, and manner.

The meanes are either ſuch, whereby we may *outwardly diſcharge* and execute this duty, or whereby we may be *inwardly diſpoſed* and inabled to this duty. Chriſt is *vocally* confeſſed by the lips, in our ſpeaking of him to others, and for him againſt oppoſers. Chriſt is *virtually* confeſſed by the life, in ſerving of him, ſticking to him, ſhewing our ſelves with his, as alſo, in ſuffering for him. All theſe things have been inſtanced in the former diſcourſes.

The *meanes* then whereby we *outwardly* fullfil and *execute* this duty are the *members*, more eminently the *tongue* or mouth, and other *inſtruments of ſpeech*.

(1.) *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth, all inordinate affection evil Concupiſcence and covetouſneſs, which are as members of the body of ſin*, and put forth into *act*, by the *members* of your *ſinful bodies*. Mortifie theſe, as you would ever have Chriſt to Confeſs you and live in you, or you would

ever

ever confess him and live with him, *Col.* 3.5. with 1. *Rom.* 8, 11, 13. (2.) And let your members be *yielded up as servants unto righteousness*, and to your redeemer, whose they are by price and contract; And so shall *others* also *glorifie God* for your *professed subjection* to the Gospel of Christ our Savior. *Rom.* 8. 13, 19. 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. 2 *Cor.* 9. 13. (3.) And so, *magnifie* the Lord Jesus in your mortal bodies, as by a *faithful* performance of, and *obedience to his commands*; so by a *cheerful* preparedness *to bear his Cross*; that both the *death* and *life* also of *Jesus may be made manifest in your bodies*, Phil. 1. 20. and Gal. 6. 17. and 2 Cor. 4. 10. (4.) Mortifie especially the *evil* of your *tongues*, both as they respect *God*, and as they respect *man*. For how shall the *same mouth both bless and curse? How can the same fountain yield both salt water and fresh?* James 3. 9---13. and Ephes 4. 29. (5.) Mind the *end of speech*, which is to *extol* God and *edifie man*, and therewith the *excellency* of speech, which is a *singular glory* that God hath put upon man, *to the end his tongue may glorifie his Maker*, Psalm 71. 23, 24, and 30. 12. (6.) Model the *exercise* of speech to the end of speech; that you do not both steal from God, and spoyle your own glory. Your *speech should be always seasoned with Salt*, your *tongues should be as the pen of a ready writer*. *Awaken* therefore thy *glory*, accustome the concerns of Christ more to thy *ordinary* converse; and so shalt thou *give him praise*, *even with thy glory*, Col. 4. 6. Psal. 45. 1, 2. & 57. 8. and 108. 1.

The *meanes* whereby we are *fitted and inabled* to confess Christ. I shall reduce to Three heads, Cease from self: Set your souls: Be strong in the spirit.

First, *Cease from self*, *self-denial* is the *first letter* in the *Alphabet* of Confession, that Christ puts his Confessors unto, [*Mark* 8. 34. *Luke* 9. 23.] Here you must *deny* wicked, worldly, wise, and wilful-self. (1.) You must *deny wicked self*, self wickedness. *Sin* is become another *self* to man, and is become as near and dear, as *a right eye* or *a right hand*. As ever you would confess to Salvation, you must *Crucifie sin*.

2 *Tim.*

2 *Timothy* 2. 19. and *Galathians* 6. 14. and 5. 24. (1.) *Scandalous* sins will *null your Confession* of Christ *before others*, who will rather believe *one action* of yours *against* Christ, then *ten arguments* of yours *for* Christ; and will the more *blaspheme* your Lord Christ and your Confessions because of the *loosness* of your conversations, *Romanes* 2. 24. and 1 *Timothy* 6. 1. and *Philippians* 3. 18, 19. (2). *Secret* sins will either *null you as to the confession* of our Savior, so that Christ will be no longer professed to by you, 1 *John* 2. 19. and *Jude* 19, or *null your confession* as to *your own salvation*, for that Christ at last will profess *against* you, *Luke* 13. 27. *Mathew* 7. 23.

II. You must *deny worldly self*, self worldliness. The love of the *world* will soon eat out your love to the *word of Christ*, and to *Christ the word, Whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God*, 1 John 2 15. and James 4. 4. As ever you would be thriving and pious confessors, take *Pauls* course, *consult not with flesh and blood*, either your own, or others; but *immediately* set about the work of God, *Galathians* 1. 16. and *Psalm* 119. 60. Deny your *relations* in the world. Do they draw you from Christ? Diswade you from Confession? Discourage you under, or as concerns the Cross? Give them a deaf ear at least: Remembring, though you must *love* father, mother, wife, children, brethren, *&c. well*; Yet you must love your souls, your Savior, and his service *better*; or *you are not worthy of him*, nor will he own you, *Luke* 14. 26, 27. and *Mathew* 10. 37, 38. Nay, should *good* men diswade thee in this, from thy duty to thy Savior, though out of dearness to thy self, and to secure thee from danger; Yet shouldest thou *refuse* their *councels*, and *rebuke* their *corruptions*, as *Christ* and his *Apostles* have done in the *like* case, when God would be better glorified by their open profession and obviousness to persecution, *Matthew* 16. 22, 23. and *Acts* 21. 12, 13.

(2.) Deny the *representations* of the world: whatever profits, pleasures, preferments, *&c.* are *possessed* in *hand*, or are *presented* to *hope*. Alas! What can any, or all these do for, or deserve from,

from, or for thee, as Chriſt hath done and deſerved. One hours communion with Chriſt, out-bids the greateſt comfort, and moſt grateful confluence of the creatures. Sirs, theſe are the *rocks* and ſands whereupon profeſſours, uſually are *ſplit* and *ſhipwracke*, 1 Timothy 6. 9, 10. Philippians 2. 21. 2 Timothy 4. 10. Away then with overvaluing thoughts of theſe poor and periſhing injoyments. *The worſt of Chriſt is better, then the beſt of Creatures*; his *reproaches* then their *riches*, (to an eye of faith) and theſe are but *loſs and dung* to be laid in the other ſcale againſt him, *Hebrews* 11. 26. *Philippians* 3. 8. And let me add, that he that *ſeeks* theſe things *more* then Chriſt, and will *preſerve them*, rather then *profeſs him*, when his intereſt calls for it, is the likelieſt man in the whole world, to *loſe* both *him*, and *them*, and *his own ſoul*: whereas he that *ſubordinates* them to Chriſt, and will rather part with them, then not profeſs him, is the likelieſt to *ſave* both *him*, and *them*; Yea, and to *gain* by his *loſſes*, if not the *ſame* in *kinde* and in the *letter*, yet in *value* or rather in the *better*, an *hundredfold for one*, Luke 9 24, 25, 26, and Matthew 10. 39. 19. 28, 29.

(3) You muſt deny your *ſelf-wiſdom* alſo. This is *fooliſhneſs* with God, and *vanity*, as to your *eternal* good, 1 Corinthians 3. 18, 19, 20. Therefore, though I ſhould call you to the *holy wiſdom*, that looks at God upmoſt; yet I muſt charge you, that you *ceaſe from your own wiſdom*, and that you *leane not to your own underſtanding*, Proverbs 23. 4. 3. 5, 6, 7.

1. Ceaſe from the *deſigns* and *dictates* of this wiſdom, which ſubordinates *piety* to *policy*, *God* to *mammon*, *godlineſs* to *gain*, *heaven* to *earth*, the Confeſſions of your Savior to the concernments of your ſelves. *This wiſdom is not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, devilliſh*; Such as God hath made *fooliſhneſs*, and will manifeſtly diſappoint, and deſtroy, and that for ever, *James* 3. 15. 1 *Cor.* 1. 19, 20.

2. Ceaſe

Ceaſe from the *directions* of this wiſdome in *departure* from *Gods word* and from *thy work*: If it ſuggeſt other Salvoes from Confeſſion then the Scripture owns and countenanceth, *check* it with a *Be not wiſe above what is written, be not wiſe in thy own conceits,* (1 Cor. 4. 6. Rom. 12. 16.) If it ſaith, *Better ſin then ſuffer, better turn then burn,* better to *diſſemble,* or *deny,* then *die,* better *ſtrain a point in profeſſion,* then *ſtarve in priſon*; better truſt God with my Soul in complying to the World, then truſt men with my ſtate in continuing faithful to his word: *This thy way is thy folly, and will ſurely iſſue in damnation finally,* (Pſal. 49. 13. Iſai 47. 10, 11. Rom. 3. 8.

Sect. 2. Secondly, *Set your ſouls to it*; ingage thy *ſoul* within, and this will ingage thy *ſpeech* without; *ſet your hearts,* and this will actuate your ſpeech. The *word* of Chriſt in your *heart, will be as a burning fire ſhut up in your bones, you will be weary with forbearing,* and cannot ſtill or ſmother it ſo, but it will blaze forth, (*Jer.* 30. 21. *Deut.* 32. 46. *Jer.* 20. 9.) Oh, if your hearts were but boyling with and *inditing of good matters* within, they would ſoon boil over into the ſequacious members without. You would be *ſpeaking of the things which concern the King, and your tongues would be the pens as of ready writers,* (Pſalm 45. 1.) Set your underſtandings then, your wills, and your affections to this work.

(1.) Set your *underſtandings and conſciences* to this work. Unleſs thou know Chriſt in thy *minde,* how canſt *thou* confeſs him with thy *mouth*? Know him *well,* and thou art not like to confeſs him *ill. Make me, O Lord, to underſtand the way of thy precepts, ſo ſhall I talk of thy wondrous works,* (Pſalm 119. 27.) *Underſtanding is a well-ſpring of life to him that hath it,* and from his lips run the ſtreams and violets of wiſdom, *Prov.* 16. 22, 23, 13. 10.

1. Let theſe *compare circumſtances* among themſelves, and *confer them* with the ſacred *ends,* which God hath charged you to intend. Here let Chriſtian prudence and conſcience hold the ballance with an even hand. *Diſcuſs* the matters *freely by,* and *determine* them *faithfully, according to the Rules already given you,* and I doubt not but you will diſcern your *duty,* and diſcern your *li-*

berty, and be *directed* upon each *emergency*, when this confession will be of best expediencie for the *edifying* of your *Brother* on earth, and for the *glorifying* of your *Father* in *heaven*, (1 *Cor.* 6. 12. 10. 23.

Secondly, Let them *consider seriously*. *Hearken, Oh daughter, and consider*; This is the Churche's call from Christ her Saviour, (*Psalm* 45. 10.) If you will not *consider*, how shall you *confess*? Consideration is the in-let to, and will induce confession and continuance in well-doing (*Hebr.* 3. 1. 12. 2.) *All men shall fear and shall declare the works of God*, saith the *Psalmist*. Why so? *For they shall wisely consider of his doings*, (Psalm 64. 9.) *Know therefore this day in thy heart, and consider in thy heart*. What an *object* is now before thee; what an *office* or obligation is now upon thee? what an opportunity is now presented thee? at thy peril if thou pass them by, it would be worse then *bruitish* dissingennity, (*Deut.* 4. 39. *Psalm* 50. 22. *Isai* 1. 3, 4.

Thirdly, *Commune with your selves*. Self-communing is a ready step to sound confession. The want of that infers also the want of this (*Hos.* 7. 1, 2. *Jer.* 5, 23, 24.) 1. Then be *frequent in self reflections*. Return often upon your own Consciences, as ever you would be ready to this open confession of Jesus. Say, *What have I done, and am now doing?* Have I asserted the Cause, acknowledged the concerns, and attended the confession of my Lord Jesus, or have I declined, denied, dissembled? *&c.* Remember your *former bold appearances* for and attestations to Christ, and *repent and do your first works*, (Rev. 2. 5. 3. 3.) Remember else your former *backwardness* and averseness, and now repair his honour and your homage, (1 *Peter* 4. 2, 3.) As long as you will not *reflect*, and say, What have I done? it is never like to be *right*, whatsoever you either *say* or *do* (*Jer.* 8. 5, 6. 2. 23.) 2. *Be frequent in self-reasonings* also. *Argue out thy own inward averseness*. Why art thou so cast down? Why art thou so cold, Oh my Soul? Why so loth? Why dost so lagge behind? What reason is there for such recesses by thee, who *hast* such a *Redeemer*, and who *hopest* for such a *Reward*?

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VVhy art thou so averse? why so afraid and so ashamed in the matters which so highly concern Gods actual glory and thy own eternal good? *Argue of thy outward awkwardness*, and to a more overt appearance, *Should such a man as I flee, fail, or faint*, that have such a *Christ*, such a *cause*, such a *covenant*, and hope for such a *Crown*, such a *Kingdom*, such *consequences*? I that am so *capitulated*, so circumstanced, so commanded? *&c. Argue down others advices and assertions*: should I hearken to *men* more then to my *Maker*? should *I* accept and attend their counsels more then his *commands*, then his *communion*? should I preserve my self by provoking my *Saviour*? should *I* lose my soul that *I* may keep my state? *&c.*

Fourthly, *Close sincerely*, or you will never be found Confessors. He that will bustle with the *dictates* of his own Conscience, will never be brought to the *difficulties* of an open confession, but will surely *shipwrack* both that and this, (1 *Tim.* 1. 19.) *Attend* the *intimations*, and *items* of Conscience inlightned by Scriptures: *Act up to its impresses*. Are you *pressed and bound in spirit*, as *Paul* sometimes was. Do not oppress or stifle it, but satisfie such *bonds* and *obligations* of Conscience as he did, *testifying both to Jews and Gentiles, That Jesus was the Christ, whatsoever bonds or afflictions did abide him* for it, (Acts 18. 5. 20. 22, 23. 17. 16, 17.

(2.) Set your *wills* to this work. That our confessions are so *defective*, is usually through the wills default, which hath the *dominion* over the outward works and parts. A willing heart will make a willing head, hand, mouth, and members, (*Exod.* 35. 21, 22, 29. *Psalm* 40. 8.) And indeed the *welcome* Confession is the *willing* Confession, (*Neh.* 11. 2. *Judg.* 5. 2. 1 *Cor.* 9. 17.

First, Set therefore the *election* of your wills aright. *If your choice be* rotten *your* confession *will never be right*, but a good choice will infer a *good* confession. *I have chosen the way of thy truth*, (saith *David*.) VVhat then? *Thy judgements have I laid before me, I have stuck unto thy testimonies, I will run the wayes of*

thy Commandments, (Psalm 119. 30, 31, 32.) They that leave the commands and Cross of Christ out of their choice at first, especially when the commands are hard and the Cross is heavy, their corrupt hearts being not yet changed (Jo. 6. 26, 60, 66. Luke 8. 13. 1 Tim. 5. 11, 12, 15.) See then that there be a thorow conversion of you to Christ, or we shall never see a thorow confession of Christ by you. And remember, that the true Confessor is not charged simply to bear his Cross, but to take up his Cross. It should be the matter of his own choice, and not only of anothers cruelty, (Matth. 10. 38. Mark 8. 34.

Secondly, Set your intentions right. As the end directs and is instructive, so it draws and is impulsive to the use of all meanes whereby we may attain it. Vigorous intentions for God and his Gospel will beget vigorous indeavours for God and his Gospel. They that seek God with their whole heart, they also do no iniquity, they walk in his wayes (Psalm 119. 2, 3.) When your intentions are actually right for Christ, your inclinations will be ready also for confession, (1 Peter 3. 14, 15. Acts 20. 24.) Do you intend the glory of God in Christ as your greatest businesse? and the injoyment of God in Christ, as your greatest blessednes, and are the edification of Christians and the inlargement of the Church your greatest Bias in your ordinary converse? What then can impede your course or intercept your Confessions; while these counsels and intentions are upmost, and you may clearly obtain these ends by an open confession? The place and power of the end in nature, beside the precedents of pious ones in Scripture are a clear and full proof in this particular (Phil. 1. 20, &c. Ps. 73. 25. ad finem.

Thirdly, Set the resolutions of your wills aright. Mens halvings in Religion arise out of half resolutions. Let your resolutions be but constant, and Religion cannot but be confessed (1 King. 18. 21. Hos. 6. 4.) Away then with your Agrish fits and fluctuancies of resolution, as ever you would adhere faithfully to Religion. An holy resolution will never forsake the holy Faith, nor fall before the unholy Idol, no not for fear of the hottest Furnace, and though it can fore-see no hopes of deliverance in

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second Causes. But if *liberty* be not enough for his Lord Christ, he shall have his *life* also, (*Daniel* 3. 17, 18. *Acts* 21. 13.) This soul *will follow God fully*, with *Caleb*, whatever it cost, and so he findes the *promised rest*, (Numb. 14. 24.) This Confessor hath *sworn, and he will perform it, he will keep Gods righteous judgements* whatever happens. *His heart is inclined to perform his Statutes always, even to the end*, (Psal. 119. 106, 112.) Put on then and preserve this holy courage and happy stoutness for thy Saviour Christ. *All people will walk every one in the Name of his God*, (and shall the professer of Christ *warp?* Nay, say you also) *we will walk in the Name of our God for ever and ever*, Mic. 4. 5.

(3.) Set your *affections* to this work. *Affections are* (much what) *the spring of action.* These you must ingage most *firmly* to God, and God inquireth after these most fully in you, *who is this that ingageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?* Jer. 30. 21. The more *fixed* your affections are upon Christ, the more *free* and full will be your acknowledgements of and unto Christ, (Psalm 108. 1. 57. 7.) 'Tis true, such affections as have *evil* for their *object* must be *kept off from* Christ, but such as have *good* for their *object* must be *quickned* toward *and kept up upon* and with Christ.

(1.) Keep off the former from Christ, especially sinful shame, and fear.

First, *Keep off shame.* As you would *endure the Cross*, and witness a good confession, you must *despise the shame*, (Hebr. 12. 2.) And indeed nothing but *sin, properly*, is the *object of shame*, or in *order* to sin. Others you see glorying in their shame, and will you be *ashamed of your glory?* Brethren, it is no shame to speak, do, or *suffer as a Christian.* 'Tis rather a *glory* both to your selves and Saviour, who is herein *glorified by you*, and you also may *glory in him*, and in *it* through him, and *the spirit of Glory resteth on you*, (1 Peter 4. 13. —17. *Acts* 5. 41.) Let the *proud* be ashamed, for *sin doth*, and *God will stain the pride of their glory*; but let not the *pious* Professor be asha-

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med, on whom the *spirit* of Glory resteth, and for whom the *state* of Glory is reserved. *You should speak of his testimonies before Kings, and not be ashamed* (Psalm 119. 46. This should be your *earnest expectation and hope*, *that in nothing you shall be ashamed*, whatever you abide for confessing Christ in an *afflicted life*, or *inflicted death*, (Phil. 1. 20.) Is not a *glorified Christ ashamed* to call you *his* in *Heaven*? And shall *vilified Christians* be ashamed to call Christ *theirs* upon *Earth*, far be it! As you would not have Christ to be ashamed of you, (*Hebr.* 2. 11. 16. Mark 8. 38.) Are the perfect exercises of Christianity and injoyment of Christ, the business (and *blessedness* also) of the glorified spirits *there*? Certainly, they do not call for, or cause shame *here*. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of thy Lord*; neither of his cause, nor of thy call, neither of his Captives, nor of their chains, (2 *Tim.* 1. 8. 12. 16.

Secondly, *Keep down fear*. Fear of *sinful men*, and of *suffering miseries*. As you would not *strengthen faith*, *suppress anxious and amazing fears*, which cause a snare, and contract a stain upon your cause, straitness upon the conscience, spoil your confession, and are a shame to Confessors, (*Isa.* 8. 12. 13. *Prov.* 28. 26.) Christ therefore carefully *preventeth these* when he *presseth this*, (Luke 12. 3. --- 10 Matth. 10. 26. — 34.)

Truth is *Confessors* of all others, have least *cause* of *inordinate* fears, who have the All-mighty presence of God to *keep* them, and the aboundant promises of his Grace to *comfort* them. Hear him, *I, even I am he, that comforteth you: Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the Son of man that shall be made as Grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?* &c. *Fear thou not, loe, I am with thee, be not dismaied, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the Right-hand of my righteousness. Fear not thou worm* Jacob, *and ye men of* Israel, *I the Lord thy God will hold thy right-hand*, &c. (*Isa.* 51. 12, 13. 41. 10. — 17.) *Turn* your *fears* then into the *right* proper *channel*; turn them in upon *sin*, and upon the *severities* of God for sin. But *stand fast in the Faith, quit*

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quit you like men, and ſtrive together for the faith of the Goſpel, (1 Cor.16.13. Phil.1.27.) *Be not afraid of their terrours, nor be troubled; But ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, and let him be your fear and your dread, and ſo be you ready always to give to every man that aſketh you, a reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſſe and fear. Being nothing terrified by your adverſaries which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of ſalvation, and that of God.* 1 Pet.3.14,15. Phil.1.28.

(2) Quicken and keep up ſuch affections as have *good* for their *object*, eſpecially ſpiritual love, hope and joy.

Firſt, *Quicken and keep up love.* If you *love Chriſt*, how can you be *loath to confeſs.* Holy love *ſetches in, fixeth and ſtreth* the interiour minde and exteriour members, to and for its beloved. *The love of Chriſt* (ſaith *Paul*) conſtrains us, *συνέχει*, it hath, hems in, and holds in the whole man together, and there is no getting out from the holy ſiege and coarctation of this holy love, (2 Cor.5.14.) Love unites the ſtrength of the ſoul *within it ſelf*, and *upon its object* beloved, and the ſtreams thereof never flow more freely, then when it can vent and unboſom it ſelfe in the confeſſions and commendations of this object moſt fully. How *ſick* was the Spouſe of *love* to Chriſt! and therewith to be declaring of, diſcuſſing about, and dilating upon her deareſt and *altogether lovely*, (Cant.5.8. ad finem 2.5. &c.) *Love* is venturous, vehement, victorious, and will at no hand be either *flattered*, and bribed out of, or frighted and beaten from Chriſt, or any of his concernments; *Chriſtian love* is an *holy Fire*, that is quenched by none, but conſumeth all the waters of adverſity and affliction that are caſt upon, or come near unto it, (Cant.8. 6,7.) Chriſtian love facilitates alſo, and makes the difficulties of the Command and of the Croſs, *eaſie, amiable, admirable*, and (to no ſmall degree) *deſirable* and *delicious*; (1 John 5.3. 2 Cor.12.10.) Did *Iacobs* ſervice ſeem but a *few dayes* to him, *for the love that he had to Rachel*, (Gen.29.20.) Oh! how *eaſie* will be the *yoak*! how *light* will be the *burden* of confeſſion to us, when our hearts are once overpowered with divine love,

love, to this dear Redeemer, (*Cantic.* 1.3, 4. 2.3, &c.

Secondly, *Quicken and keep up hope.* The *Aspect* and *Acts* of divine hope refer you all to *Christ*, that he may *be glorified by you in the confession of him*; and you may be *glorified with him in his confession of you*, who is the Object of our hope, (1 *Tim.* 1.1. *Phil.* 1.20. *Eph.* 1.12. *Tit.* 1. 13. *Acts* 28.20.) Sirs, this holy hope will anchor and rest your hearts in the greatest stormes you now foresee, or shall feel and find. While those threaten shipwrack to the faithful Confessors *beneath*; this hath firme anchoridge *within the veil above*: so that, even then, you may have strong consolation, through the *power and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father*, (Hebr. 6.18,19. 1 Thes. 1.3.) Christians will you but cast out this anchor, you may ride out the most violent times and tempests, with an unmoveable and unshaken confidence, as *Iob* and *David* have done before you, (*Job* 19.13.——29. *Psal.* 16.8. *ad finem*) Sirs, this holy hope will assure and rejoyce your hearts, and that in the greatest straits, that are or can come upon you for confessing the Name of Jesus. This hath *Cordial* and *Celestial* waters in its hand for you, to revive you in every swoon, and refresh you in every sadness. Oh Christians! how may you *rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God, and glory in tribulations also.* (Rom. 12.12. 5.2.——6.) No marvel if your hearts are sad, when your hopes are sunk. Quicken and call forth these hopes often into act and employment; And think it not enough that you *have*, but you must hold *fast the confidence and rejoycing of your hopes firme and stedfast unto the end*, Heb. 3.6,14.

Thirdly, *Quicken and keep up joy.* Joy sets open the doors of the soule, to let in all encouraging means and motives: Fears shrival, contract and straiten the heart; but *Joy* dilates, and widens, and enlarges it, to do the utmost duties, and indure the utmost dangers that may come upon us for confessing Christs Name, (2 *Cor.* 6.4.——12.) Joy strengthen, whereas fear and grief weaken: The *Joy of the Lord is our strength*, (Nehem. 8.10) Joy sweetens, whereas fear and grief embitters the affliction, that is coming on. It sweetens the Crosse, and so contemns the shame, that is cast upon him for the sake of Christ: yea, and counts it his Credit, his Crown, and blesseth that happy Providence that calls him forth to witnesse, and *counts him worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus.* (Heb. 12. 2. Acts 5.41.) *I am filled with comfort* (saith *Paul*) *I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation*, (2 Cor. 7.4.) Maintain your comforts then as you would maintain the Interest of Christ, and pay your debt of Confession. Let your course be finished with joy, and your confession will befall it in liberty and freedom, (*Act.* 20.24.) yield not to your own despondencies, upon increasing difficulties. *Count it joy, all joy, when you fall into*

into divers temptations. Here is no reaſon for any retractation without, or of racking fears, griefs or cares within. *Rejoyce* rather, *in as much as ye are made partakers of Chriſts ſufferings, that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo, with exceeding joy,* (Jam. 1.2. 1 Pet. 4.13.

Sect. 3. Thirdly, *be ſtrong in the ſpirit.* The fleſh will pull you back, and at beſt profits nothing. 'Tis the *ſpirit alone,* that can ſavingly impower and enable you to a ſuitable and ſincere Confeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt; *No man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt,* (Jo. 6.63. 1 Cor. 12.3.) Set not about it then in thine own *ſtrength,* which is *weakneſs:* But be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Alas! what are all created ſtreams of ſtrength, without the freſh ſupplies from the *ſpring* and *fountain* of it, God himſelf, (*Eph.* 6.10. *Pſal.* 73.26.) *Sollicit Heaven* then, as well as *ſtrive with thine own heart,* that thou mayſt be *ſtrengthned by Gods ſpirit in the inner man.* In that thy ſtrength is ſo little, and the ſervice is ſo great, ply heaven the harder, and fetch down a daily influx of divine help. Thou hadſt need *be ſtrengthned with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs.* Run to him then in every difficulty, repoſe thy ſelf upon him in every duty. Draw ſtrength from him that thou mayeſt declare the ſufficiency that is in and with him. *Bleſſed is the man, O Lord, whoſe ſtrength is in thee!* (Col. 1.11. Eph. 3.16. Pſal. 84.5.) let me eſpecially commend unto you the ſpirit of faith, of patience, and the ſpirit of prayer.

(1) Get and keep up a *ſpirit of faith.* Oh the preciouſneſs and power of faith! which the faithful Profeſſor doth better feel then ſpeak of. Brethren, *be ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God,* as *Abraham* was, and did, (*Rom.* 4.20.) It was through the power of faith, that pious *Timothy* and thoſe precious *Confeſſours,* Hebr. 11. *profeſſed ſo good a Profeſſion* before men, and of God, (1 *Tim.* 6.12. *Heb.* 11. *throughout*) Faith will engage God with you, and you for God, (*Pſal.* 82.1,2. 62.1,2, &c.) As ever you would finiſh your courſe then, and fulfil your capacity, calling, and Chriſtian Confeſſion. *Keep the faith,* (2 Tim. 4.7.) Faith will hold forth the Confeſſion: He that beleeves in Chriſt with

the heart, will be breathing out his knowledge of Christ by the mouth. *I believed therefore have I spoken*, saith *David*, *We also believe, and therefore speak*, saith *Paul*. Let faith but command your thoughts, and it will soon carry your tongues after it, (*Rom.* 10.10. 2*Cor.* 4.13. *Psal.* 16.10.) Faith will hold fast the Confession also *even where Satan dwells*, and when the Saints are sacrificed and slain, (*Rev.* 2.13.) The grace of faith will not let go the doctrine of faith, whatever comes of it, but continues the soul grounded, setled and immoved, (2*Tim.* 1.13. *Col.* 1.23.) Let the world oppose, faith will overcome, and be at length too hard for all adversaries. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* (1 John 5. 4,5.) Once more, Faith will uphold the Confessors. 'Tis *by faith they stand* and are established: They are *kept through faith*, (1 Cor. 11.20. *Col.* 2.7. 1 Pet. 1.5.) Brethren, *keep the faith and it will keep you, if this stand you stand*, and are safe; if this fail you fall, and without faith you must needs faint and swoon away. Look to your faith then; be found in the doctrine of faith: be sincere in the grace of faith. Here is that must quench temptations, and keep you up under tribulations. If you have not a sound faith, you will surely turn Apostates, as *Demas* and others did.

(1) Keep up the *acts* of faith. A *lazie habit* will not preserve you. It was by faith, as in *act* and *exercise*, that they did and suffered so great things, *Heb.* 11. 'Tis said, *the just shall live by his faith* (Hab. 2.4.) Oh! make a life of it! If this live, thou shalt live also. But if this lie dead, and in the habit only; the *labours of love*, and *patience of hope* will be dead also, and if there be Profession left, 'twill be but as a noisom carcass in the Nostrils of God, if not of man also. Act faith then, and to the uttermost. An Active faith is of an unspeakable advantage. See the eminent and enriching effects thereof in those excellent Confessours: What did they do and indure? or rather what did they not do and endure? through an active and acted faith, *Heb.* 11.32. *ad finem*)

What is the *evil*, whereby Satan or sinners would fright you off from confessing Christ? Faith in act can and will shew you

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a greater evil. They can ſhew you a priſon, a ſtake, an halter, and other torments. But faith can ſhew you an *hell*, ſhew you *Tophet*, ſhew you *torments beyond eaſe*, beyond *exemption*, beyond *end*.

What is the *good* whereby they would *flatter* you from your Confeſſion? Faith can tell you of *everlaſting treaſures*, of *eternal pleaſures*, of *endleſs peace* and *boundleſs joyes*, that *neither eye hath ſeen, nor eare heard, nor heart conceive*: Yea, and that *afflictions work glory, light* afflictions a *weight* of glory, afflictions for a *moment* an *eternal* glory; yea, an *exceeding*, a *more* exceeding, a *far more* exceeding and eternal weight of glory, (2 *Cor.* 4.17. *ad finem*) *Stir up* and *ſtrengthen faith* then, and keep it upon the wheel of action. An *unacted* faith is accounted as *no* faith, or at beſt, but *a very little faith*, by our bleſſed Lord, if you compare theſe Scriptures, *Luke* 8.35. with *Mar.* 4.40. *Mat.* 28.26. 'Tis of none, or very little *acceptance* with God, of none or very little *avail* for our good.

(2) Keep up ſpecially the *adherence and aſſurance* of faith.

The *Adherence* of faith. This knits the heart of the holy Confeſſor with Chriſt in an indiſſoluble league. If he *liveth*, it ſhall be *with* Chriſt. If he *dieth*, it ſhall be *in* Chriſt. Thus *faith* hath *eſpouſed Chriſts intereſt* to him, and his *own* to Chriſt. *Chriſts cauſe is his cauſe*, Chriſts *concernments* are his *concernments*; and there cannot be ſuch perſons or principles, as are friends or enemies to Chriſt, but this ſoule counts them *his* friends, and *his* enemies, according to the degree of light and knowledge which he hath. When the *temporarie Profeſſor* doth *kiſs and part* from him, *now* this *true* Confeſſor *cleaveth firmeſt unto, and claſpeth faſteſt about him*, (Act. 11.23. Ioſh. 23.8.) No exigence, no exile, no threats, no tortures, no diſtreſs, no not to death it ſelf can take off the faith of *adherence*, from its teſtimony to his beloved and bleſſed Ieſus. The ſoul reſolves to *live his Saint*, or to *die his Martyr* (Heb. 11.35.——38. Dan. 3.17,18.) Thoſe troubles which now *looſen* him from *other comforts*, do yet *bind* him ſtronger to his *only Chriſt*, (Act. 21.13. Phil. 1.21.)

Keep up the *Aſſurance* of faith likewiſe. Oh! the comforts, courage and conſtancy that this will furniſh you with? Who can

be *afraid of sufferings*, that at the same time is *assured of salvation?* afraid to part with *earth for confessing*, that is assured of *heaven upon confessing?* afraid to breath out his *natural life in it*, that is assured to exchange it immediately for a better, for an *eternal life upon it:* when he is sure to exchange a *filthy prison* for his *Fathers Presence*, his *standing at wans bar*, for *sitting upon Gods Bench*, &c. Well Christians, would you *hold fast the Profession of your faith without wavering: Draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. Hold fast your confidence*, and you will hold fast your confession, (Col. 2.2. Heb. 10.22,23.) Are your spiritual states at an uncertainty? sit not down therein: *But give diligence to the full assurance of hope; make your calling and election sure. For he that doth these things shall never faile*, Heb. 6.11. 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11.

II. (2) Get and keep up *a spirit of patience*. Brethren *you have need of patience*, both for *establishing your Profession*, and *enduring persecution*, and for *expecting the Promises*, (Heb. 10.32. *ad finem*) Take heed, keep patience, not only in habit, but in act, as you would keep and crown your Profession and Testimony to the truth of Jesus. Lo! *here is the patience of the Saints? here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*, (Rev. 119.14,12.) *Patience* is that, which must *compose* you to and for Confession. When you are out of a spirit of patience, you are out of your *self-possession*, and therefore unfit for this sacred Profession, or to suffer persecution. Therefore our holy *Master*, who hath given us *an example of patience* in profession, gives us also this exhortation in order to our profession, that *in patience we possess our selves*, (1 Pet. 2.21. Luke 21.19. with 14. &c.) Patience will *compleat* you in confession, and *compensate* other wants and adversities which befall you therein, by giving you a self-composedness, a sweet constancy, and serene conscience, and sweet communion with, and experience of that God, that Christ, which you suffer in and for. *Let patience have but its perfect work, and ye shall be entire, wanting nothing*, Iam. 1.4. Patience will *quiet* and *comfort* you also therein, notwithstanding persecutions. For *patience works experience* by and under them,

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and this again works *hope which maketh not ashamed*: and it *waits also for the expected end*, and happy issue promised, (*Rom.* 5. 4, 5. *Isa.* 5. 7. *Mic.* 7. 7. *&c.*) *Be patient therefore Brethren*: The more patience the better profession, and the more perseverance. *Stablish your hearts*: against the difficulties that discourage you, and in and to the duties to be discharged by you. *And be you followers of them, who through faith and patience have accomplished their Profession, and do inherit the Promises*, Isa. 5. 8, 10, 11. Hebr. 6. 11.

(3) Keep up a *spirit of prayer*. The most *eminent* for the *spirit of prayer*, have been most eminent for *sincere and steady Profession*, Witness *Elijah*, *Jacob*, *Moses*, *Daniel*, &c. 'Tis true, a *listless saying prayer* will not produce any such signal effects: But a *lively praying in prayer* (as is said of *Elias* (προσευχῇ προσηυξατο) he *prayed in prayer*) they will both *prevail with God*, and *preserve you*, and the interest of Godliness, (*Ja.* 5 17.) There were in *Judes* time, such as had exchanged their *strict profession* for a *sensual* practice. But by what meanes might the *Saints*, to whom he writes be preserved therefrom? *By praying in the Holy Ghost*. So might *they keep themselves in the love of God; looking for the mercy of our Lord Iesus Christ unto eternal life*, (Iude 19, 20.) The *spirit of Prayer bears down* what stands in the way of Profession; both inwardly in your selves, and outwardly amongst sinners. The Priests of *Baal* fell before it, and *Peter bound with two chaines, was freed by it*, (1 Kings 18. 36. &c. Acts 12. 5, 6, &c.) The spirit of prayer *brings in* divine skill and strength, and whatever else is requisite to make *good our Profession*, or to make our *Profession good*, (1*a*. 1. 5. Acts 4. 29. Rom. 8. 26, 27.) The spirit of prayer *binds* also devout soules to a strict and steady perseverance, suitable to their own prayers, and this holy Profession, (*Eph.* 6. 18. *Rom.* 8. 15, 17.) Cease not prayers then, which ingage God, interess the Gospel, and improve his perfections and promises unto thy strengthning, and that *without might; and unto all patience, suffering with joyfulness*, Col. 1. 11.

Thus far of the *meanes* how we may; the *manner* followeth, *how* we should confess *Christ*. And though the former parts of this

this discourse may afford directions at least implicit; I shall yet adde some things to direct you more *explicitely*. You must confess Christ, then

1. *Understandingly*. With your own and to others understanding. *With your own*. Far be it! that you *should not understand what you say, or whereof you affirm. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way*. Unless you *have* how can you *give a reason of the hope that is in you*? And indeed without understanding what you profess; you act therein the part of a *Parrot*, rather then of a *Professor*, (1Tim.1.7. Eph.5.17. 1Pet.3.15. Prov.14 8. Your Confession must be *to others* understanding also. *You should rather speak five words with your understanding, that by your voice you may teach others also, then ten thousand words in an unknown tongue*, or (which is to the same effect) in unknown *termes*. *Else you speak to the aire*, rather then to advantage and edification; and are *Barbarians* to others, who (*did you speak words easie to be understood*) might happily bless God for you, and be built up in godliness by you, 1 *Cor.*14.2, —— 20. Let thy *mouth then speak of wisdom, and the meditation of thy heart be of understanding*, Psal.49.3.

2. *Undoubtedly*. As beleevers should not be of doubtful mindes, so, nor of doubtful mouthes: but without cloudie obscurities, should confess openly *as things are*, according to the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, and the present circumstances wherein they are; after the precedents of *Jesus* himself, and *John* his fore-runner, (*Luke* 13.8. 2*Cor.* 12.13. *Iohn* 10.24,25.1.19. ——24.) Your discourses should drive home to the consciences of them that hear you, that *by manifestation of the Truth, you may commend your selves to every mans conscience in the sight of God*; That if their consciences do not acquit you, as the *Pharisees* once did *Paul*, yet they may *awe* and *accuse* them, 2*Cor.*4 2,5,11. *Act.* 23,9.24,25.

3. *Undauntedly*. With *boldness of spirit* within, and boldness of *speech* without; yea, with *all boldness always* (Phil.1.20. *Act.*4.29.) you should *open your mouth with boldnesse to make known the mystery of the Gospel*. This will shake the confidences of sinners, and both search and seize the consciences and spirits of the hearers, strengthen the communion of Saints, and is sealed with the concurrence of God himself, (*Eph.* 6. 19. *Act.* 4.13.13.46.4.31,32. 14.3.) Consider I beseech you the precious consequence, the pattern of Christ, the primitive Confessors, the prints of God and his Gospel upon your Cause and Call, and what then may daunt or dismay you! Sirs, you should *wax confident* (not cold) *by our bonds, and be much more bold* (not more backward) *to speak the Word of God without fear*, (Phil.1.14. *Eph.*6.20.

4. *Undividedly*, both as to your selves, and as to other Saints. Confes-

sion

sion is a work that requireth *a ready concourse of your whole selves, of the soul* and *spirit*, and *body*, for the *outward act*, and *inward animation*. (Rom.10. 9. 1*Pet.*3.15.) And a *real concurrence of all the Saints*. *Gebal*, and *Ammon* and *Amalek* combine in ungodliness, and shall the godly quarrel one the other in the Gospel. O! Where are the *golden taches* of the Tabernacle, that should *unite* the *many Curtains* into *one tent* of Confessors. Alas! for the *staffe of beauty*, and for the *staffe of bands*, so *strangely broken*! When shall Christians *stand fast in one spirit, with one mind! and strive together for the faith of the Gospel*; and no more against one another, in *ungodly factions*! The unity of Confessors will be *their glory*, and *his* also, to whom they confess. 'Tis the badge, 'tis the beauty, 'tis the blessing of the Church. *My Dove is but one* (saith Christ) *the daughter saw her and blessed her.* Yea; *there the Lord commandeth the blessing, even life for evermore*, (*Exod.*36.13. Phil.1.27. *Zach.*11.10,14. *Cantic.*6.9. *Psal.* 133. throughout.

5. *Unfeignedly*: both as concerns the external management of your Confession, and the internal minde wherewith you confess. You may not *corrupt the Word of God*, nor contemper humane traditions with divine truths; or cunningly dawb over your own worldly ends or errors, yea or Gods work and interest with the *enticing words of mans wisdom*. This work must be done *in demonstration of the spirit and of power. As of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, so should you speak in Christ*. (2*Cor.*2.17 *Col.*2.18,21. 1*Cor.*2.4,5.) Alas! for the old holy simplicity and sincerity of Profession, which is swallowed up (most-what) in the sink of *selfish policy*, though spread and shadowed over with several *guizes* of piety, Christians, look to your *spirits* as well as *speech*. *Be* sure you speak *the truth in and from your hearts*. *Bring us forth your good things out of the good treasure of a good heart*, (*Psal.*15.1,2. *Matt.*12.34,35) Let your *thoughts sense* what your *tongues speak*: That is the excellent Confession which comes from experience in the speaker, who *speaks what he feels*, and is usually consequented with choicest effects in the hearers, who *feel what the others speak*. (1 *John* 1.1,3,4. *Act.* 4. 20, 21.

6. *Universally*: both as respects things and times with the limits premised. You must never flinch, till you have *finished your testimony*, nor forbear confessing till you have *finished your counsel*: but must fight it out to the last *drop* in the *good fight of faith*, as ever you would finde that *Crown of righteousnesse*, which the Lord *the righteous Judge* reserveth for his victorious Confessors, who will not quit the Cause, nor desert the Colours, (*Rev.* 11. 7. 2 *Tim.* 4. 7.) On with your spiritual armour, you holy Confessors; (you and I *in this cause* abhor Civil) gird them fast about you, having the *shield of faith* in one hand, and *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, in the other. These are *mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds of sinne and Satan*.

Follow-

Follow the *Captain of your salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings.* Love not your lives to the death; You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Behold! Christ hath *set before thee an open door. A bold Confession will have a blessed Conclusion,* in an happy Conquest, or an honourable Crown. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the Crown of life,* (Rom. 13. 12. Eph. 6. 11. ——19. 2 Cor. 10. 4. Heb. 2. 10. Rev. 12. 11. Heb. 12. 6. Rev. 3. 8. 2, 10.

7. *Unoffensively. Give no offence, no, not in any thing,* or unto any man, that the blessed Gospel be not blamed, (1 *Cor.* 10. 32. 2 *Cor.* 6. 3.) *Lord* it not herein over other men, as if their faith were to be limited by thy faith, much less by thy phancie, (2 *Cor.* 1 24. 1 *Pet.* 5. 3.) Be lowly and meek in your answers, to them that ask you: yea, though they are adversaries to you, (1 *Pet.* 3. 15. 2 *Tim.* 2. 25.) *Set aside,* whatever matters or modes of expression may justly harden or provoke them, and study to please wherein thou mayest profit them, (1 *Cor.* 10. 33. *Rom.* 15. 2.) Comport your selves agreeable to the circumstances you are in: Others lose the benefit, and your selves may lose the blessing of your Confession, by an *unbecoming circumstance,* oft-times therein. Mind, what they can *now bear,* who are private men, (*John* 16 12.) and whose authority they also bear, who are publick Magistrates; That your zeal for God may be tempered with submission to Governours, as it ought, and so neither those nor these may take any just offence, (1 *Pet.* 2. 13. ——17. *Rom.* 13. 4, 5.

8. *Ultimately for God.* 'Tis the end, specially of intention, that puts the due estimate upon any employment or action. *Spiritual exercises without spiritual ends signifie nothing in Gods esteem.* (Zech. 7. 5, 6. *Hos.* 7. 14.) The true value of all Confession, whether vocal or virtual, active or passive, is principally from your end in Confession: not from the end of Confession (*finis operis*) but from *your end in Confession* (*finis operantis*) Whatever profession you make, or persecutions you endure, if your purpose and design thereby *determine* but in your selves, in self-applause, self-approbation, &c. you miserably destroy the same as to your souls advantage, and our Saviours acceptation; because you therein make your selves, your God, your idol, and manifestly usurp upon the throne of God, and shall therefore reap nothing but shame and sorrow, (*Jer.* 17. 13. 16. 10, 11. *Psal.* 73. 27.) See then, that you do not spoile all at last with not intending God upmost. Let your Confessions of the *Truths of God,* conclude and *terminate alone in the God of Truth. If your ends be rotten, you ruine all and abuse Religion.* Though your *bodies may be burnt,* neither souls nor bodies shall be blest: And though you may be killed and called Martyrs, yet as long as *Charity* toward God was not your principle, and the *Glory of God* was not your end, you shall be sure to lose the *Crown of Martyrdom.*

FINIS.